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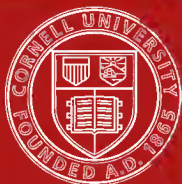
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SAMUEL HENRY JEYES









ELLIOTT & FRY.

Very sincerely yours  
S H Jeyes





# SAMUEL HENRY JEYES

A SKETCH OF  
HIS PERSONALITY AND WORK

BY

SIDNEY LOW

WITH A SELECTION  
FROM HIS FUGITIVE WRITINGS

ARRANGED AND EDITED BY

W. P. KER



LONDON

DUCKWORTH & CO.

3 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN

1915

A507674

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PART I

A SKETCH OF HIS PERSONALITY  
AND WORK



# SAMUEL HENRY JEYES

THE interest of any human life, for all but the very few who have been in intimate contact with it, depends on external circumstances as much as character. A commonplace person who has played his part on a great stage may furnish better material for the biographer than one of far finer quality to whom chance brought no adventures and fate few opportunities. The subject of the present notice passed his days in useful labour, for the most part of a kind which does not bring its author before the eyes of the world in any conspicuous fashion; and he was always reluctant to make a parade of his own personality, or to obtrude it upon the public notice. In the profitable art of self-advertisement, wherein so many men of letters are adepts, he had no sort of skill. He regarded it indeed with impatience and dislike, and maintained throughout an active literary and journalistic career a reserve so close and vigilant that he was far less known to tens of thousands of his own readers than scores of

mediocre writers with not a fraction of his ability or his influence.

Samuel Henry Jeyes was born on April 21st, 1857, at Northampton. He was the son of John Jeyes, and Sarah Frances, daughter of Henry Weldon, of Stamford. He belonged by descent to that moderately endowed class of landed proprietors which for centuries has done so much to shape the destinies of Britain. Of that order Jeyes was in many ways a typical representative; and he graduated in what may be called its representative schools. From a boyhood spent chiefly at the home of his maternal uncle, Mr. Samuel Sharp, of Dallington Hall, Northamptonshire, who was not only a country gentleman, but a distinguished antiquarian and numismatist, young Jeyes passed to Wellingborough Grammar School, to a private preparatory school at Rickmansworth, and thence to Uppingham, to Oxford, and to the Inner Temple. He went to Uppingham in 1869, at the time when that seminary was at the height of its reputation under the dominating personality of a great headmaster, Edward Thring, and he was there till he entered Trinity College, Oxford, in the autumn of 1875.

From some of those who were his contemporaries at school, and his lifelong friends afterwards, I have received reminiscences of his Uppingham years. The Rev. H. B. Freeman, Vicar of Burton-

on-Trent, Mr. W. P. James,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Arthur Hassall, now Tutor of Christ Church, Oxford, and the author of many historical works, and Mr. Edward Hamley, were among his comrades at Uppingham. The picture they give me of the youthful Jeyes, after the lapse of more than forty years, has all the impress of vitality. Time, that eater of things, still leaves our schoolboy memories untouched. "Jeyes came to my house, the Rev. W. Campbell's," says Mr. James, "with an entrance scholarship in classics. He was a very odd little boy when he made his first appearance at Uppingham. He was very short, but broad and rather round for his age and height." He grew taller afterwards, and was of good average stature, about five feet nine or ten, I should think; but he was always "rather round," and smooth, and sleek, *totus teres atque rotundus* in more senses than one. "He surveyed his new schoolboy world," adds Mr. James, "with just that smile that you knew well in after life." Alas! yes; I knew it well, that humorous, half-cynical, always kindly smile, and have seen it worn gallantly when its owner was racked by pain or vexed with care.

At school, I gather, Jeyes was not exactly a thirteen-year-old cynic, because he was too genial

<sup>1</sup> High Bailiff of Cardiff, who, for many years past, has contributed a weekly column of literary notes to the journal with which both Jeyes and myself were once closely associated.

and too full of fun ; but his attitude towards the prevalent enthusiasms and prejudices of callid youth was one of detachment tempered by an amused tolerance. He was an independent, healthy-minded youngster, manly, but not at all afraid to express open derision of the common public-school cult of "manliness," and the public-schoolmaster's conventional worship of athletic excellence and muscular Christianity, then at its height. He was not active and handy enough to excel in games ; but he would not shirk them, and did his best to play cricket and football, though with no special success. He was better at fives, rackets, and lawn tennis, at which he became a fair performer at Oxford. But throughout his life he preferred the sports of the field and the open air, the traditional recreations of English country life, to athletics and games. In his boyhood he shot and hunted, and he was always a good horseman. For the newer kinds of sport and exercise, which came into vogue after his school-days, he had no indulgence. He treated golf with open disrespect ; he never learnt to ride the bicycle ; he was not interested in motor-cars ; and he clung to the hansom when most other people in London were taking taxi-cabs.

To return to his school-days. Then, as afterwards, he was a hater of insincerity and cant, and distrusted the *vox populi*, even though it was but the voice of the Common Room and the Upper

Sixth Debating Society. Clever boys, in those Victorian days, used to grow enthusiastic over Tennyson, Ruskin, and Carlyle. Jeyes was more likely to counter them with Rabelais, an author he got to know early, and loved long. And as a cultivated Conservative Anglicanism was just then the "tone" at Uppingham, Jeyes thought fit to develop a stern and unbending Radicalism, to denounce the Church and the landed aristocracy, and to express a considerable admiration for Charles Bradlaugh, the bugbear of British respectability. He was popular at school, in spite of his limited interest in athletics, and his attacks upon orthodox etiquette and sentiment. The boys liked him, as many men and women liked him afterwards, for his wit, his courage, his shrewd sense, and the genuine kindness and good-feeling which lay beneath his irreverent satire. He had a turn for ready repartee which was not restrained by any undue respect for the constituted authorities. He could even "stand up" to the great Thring, a benevolent, but extremely despotic, ruler of his little kingdom. On one occasion the autocrat was lecturing his Upper Sixth on their ignorance of what we now call Civics. "I don't suppose," he said, "that there is one of you who could give the names of the members of the Cabinet."

"I think I could," said Jeyes.

“Oh, could you?” answered the headmaster tartly. “Then who is the Master of the Horse?”

“Not in the Cabinet, sir,” replied Jeyes very quietly.

“The reply,” says one who heard it given, “seems obvious enough now; but hardly any other of us boys, though some were verging on manhood, knew enough of politics to be able to say what constituted cabinet rank; and Thring, accustomed to facile victories, even when wrong, had counted on this. I shall never forget the look on his face as he said, ‘Oh!’ and swallowed his snub.

“Thring was a man of the most excellent disposition, in no way likely to resent what Jeyes said; but his personality was powerful, and in those days few people at Uppingham, especially few boys, cared to contend with him. The incident impressed us all immensely. Jeyes was always fond of reading about politics and current events, and I think a good deal of the time spent by others at cricket he passed in the school library with newspapers and magazines. I know on occasions, when I, who read no papers, wanted information on some subject of the day, I got it readily from him.”

No doubt it was this interest in affairs which caused him to accept the editorship of the school magazine in his last year. I have not been able to identify many of his contributions to this periodical. But there is a paper by him on “Sisters,” which is



written with much more ease and finish of style than is often found in schoolboy essays, and has distinct touches of satire, humour, and insight :

“The best of us should be handsome, clever, and true, indeed, to deserve a sister’s pride and a sister’s love ; in these there is no faltering, nothing of criticism. If anything these should keep a man straight. But do you imagine that such thoughts as these trouble our young friend’s head? The idea of his own unworthiness, if it ever occurred or were placed before him, he would dismiss as too good a joke ; the admiration he accepts as his due, while of the love he is all unconscious. For it is the way of our amiable sex to place slight value upon what is given without grudge or stint. Yet it does some good—this fictitious feeling of one’s own superiority ; especially to those who cannot often enjoy it. For the benefit of such as these were Comic Songs, Chess, and Latin Verses invented. These are they who shuffle their feet at Debates, who chaff bowlers, who crack walnuts in school-time. And it is well that they so do ; or their existence might be forgotten. It is true enough that a man’s worth is to be measured by the verdict of his own sex ; but it is good for him that he should sometimes see himself in a mirror which distorts to flatter. Caliban, perchance, had a spaniel which loved him ; perchance he treated it kindly. And Miranda could do no more for Ferdinand, and Ferdinand not much more for Miranda. Nor will our young friend’s illusion last his lifetime ; some day he will seek, and may not obtain, a favourable verdict from somebody else’s sister.”

This is not bad for a moralist of eighteen. I imagine the young gentleman had been reading his Thackeray, always one of his favourite novelists.

But there is something in it of his own, something that those who knew him in after life will recognise as characteristic, in its shrewd and kindly glances at common human relationships and particularly at the relationships of men and women.

In his studies Jeyes, like many other clever boys, affected to be rather idle and "casual." As a fact, though he showed little aptitude for mathematics or modern languages, he worked steadily at his classics, and became a very good scholar, with a sound grasp of style and verbal niceties, and a pretty taste in Greek iambs and Latin elegiacs. He not only read the great masters of ancient literature but enjoyed them; and he kept up his acquaintance with some of them long after he left school and college. He would turn to the ancient texts for rest and refreshment in the midst of his busy London journalism; when he went for a holiday a Sophocles or a Virgil was almost as certain to be slipped into his handbag as a box of cigars and a French novel.

In the spring of 1875 Jeyes gained an open scholarship in classics at Trinity College, Oxford, and in October of that year he went into residence. Of his university career I cannot speak from personal knowledge. I entered Balliol a year after he went to Trinity; but though thin partitions do the physical bounds of Trinity and Balliol divide, there is not, or there was not at that era, much

intercourse between these two seats of learning. I knew Jeyes but slightly while we were undergraduates, and met him, I think, not more than three or four times in the rooms of other men. My own reminiscences being so unimportant, I prefer to insert this sketch of his Oxford career kindly furnished by Mr. Allan Gordon Cameron, his intimate friend then and afterwards.

“Trinity College, Oxford,” writes Mr. Cameron, “when S. H. Jeyes came into residence as a scholar at Michaelmas Term, 1875, was great in games,<sup>1</sup> but small in numbers, and the sharp lines of social cleavage inevitable in a large college had no place with us. We formed a happy family—some sixty undergrads in college rooms, Jeyes occupying the comfortable top floor of No. 9.

“It was *noblesse oblige* for scholars of the College to justify their scholarships in the class-lists, and most of our scholars, including Jeyes, abstained from rowing or games as an interruption of serious work. But scholars who did not play games were none the less welcome to the companionship of commoners who did, and Jeyes was welcomed by us all in a quite exceptional degree. His sturdy independence, his imperturbable good temper, his sparkling humour, his buoyant disposition, and his

<sup>1</sup> We had F. H. Lee, Capt. of the 'Varsity Rugby Football team; A. J. Webbe, the best bat in the 'Varsity Eleven, and F. Capet Cure, who stroked the Head of the River Torpid in 1876.

genial humanity, were irresistibly attractive, and made him everybody's friend. To meet 'old Jeyes,' as he was often affectionately called by young men older than himself, meant that you were sure to enjoy a laugh, even at your own expense. His kindly chaff, which was never meant to hurt and never did, was a tonic that brightened life. Along with the high spirits which accompany perfect health he was gifted with the infinite tact which comes from goodness of heart, and with an absence of egotism extraordinary in so young a man. Hence, his conversation was always delightful, because he talked to please his listener and not to please himself. A common college friend once said of him to the writer: 'Whenever I am in the blues I go and have a talk with Jeyes; it's as good as a glass of champagne.' And it was.

"Notwithstanding the social temptations which beset a popular man at college, 'old Jeyes' took his career seriously from the beginning, and never deviated from the straight path which he had mapped out for himself. He possessed the self-control which makes for success, and time filched from his work by importunate friends could be repaid during long afternoons when the friends were tied to the river. The Greek and Latin classics he really loved, and their idiomatic translation was a literary exercise which particularly stirred his interest. Hence, his 'first' in Mods came easily to

him, and the 'first' in Greats, which every one expected of him was missed, probably because the subjects were less congenial. Thucydides was his favourite among the Greeks, and Juvenal among the Latins. The mordant irony of the Roman especially appealed to him. Of modern English writers he preferred George Eliot, and notably *Middlemarch*. A vivid memorial of his own course of reading, his methods of study, his favourite books, and the points of view which led him to success, will be found embodied in a little book bearing the title *Entrance Classical Scholarships*, published at Oxford by James Thornton in 1881. A mass of terse common sense, acute reflection, and pungent humour is packed into the fifty pages of this modest volume.

“Achievement in the Schools, for a man who has many friends, is only one part of 'varsity life. Character and influence make their weight felt in hours of leisure rather than in hours of grind. While Jeyes took his work seriously, he took his play humorously, and herein revealed an intellectual precocity which, even among the best men of his year, placed him on a platform entirely his own. His characteristic mode of thought was a frank cynicism—not the tired cynicism of Ecclesiastes, nor the bored cynicism of Schopenhauer, but the sober cynicism of a well-balanced mind, free from pose or affectation, tempered by an acute sense of humour

and expressed with a ready wit which was a constant source of joy to intimate friends. Oxford in the late seventies provided abundant material for the satirist. Thoughtful undergraduates, stirred by the growing struggle between old faiths and new, were profoundly puzzled by the motley host of clamant signboards on the devious path of truth. Oscar Wilde was preaching a new religion of æsthetics; Symonds and Pater countered him with a humanistic gospel of the Renaissance; T. H. Green was leading a destructive onslaught upon Herbert Spencer; and an anonymous book, entitled *Supernatural Religion*, had convulsed the churches. Jeyes, at nineteen, was really remarkable in the fact that he could come to grips with this bewildering babel of tongues, grasp the weak points of each, and make effective fun of them, one and all. Argument from an able antagonist sharpened his wit, but he would drop a discussion the moment it heated his opponent, and nothing bitter at the expense of an antagonist ever passed his lips. Therefore he had the greater influence, and his influence was wholly good. Few thoughtful young men could associate long with Jeyes without acquiring a broader vision, a more proportionate outlook, and an appreciative sense of having 'come up against' something strong.

"The strength of Jeyes lay in his well-furnished brain. An omnivorous reader, he had always at

command what Pascal shrewdly terms *une pensée de derrière la tête* ; but he never paraded his own opinions or beliefs, and was content sympathetically to discuss those of his friends. Nevertheless, it was not difficult to infer from his conversation that at this period of his life he was powerfully influenced by the writings of J. S. Mill, and, in particular, by the *Principles of Political Economy*, the *Liberty*, the *Dissertations*, and the *Logic*. Yet he was a student always, a disciple never. No one knew better than ‘old Jeyes’ that the opinions of youth are in a state of flux, and that lapse of time may change them beyond recognition. In the domain of philosophy and religion he gave the impression at all times of being completely detached. He was justly impatient of sciolists. ‘Read what the big men say for themselves, not what the little men say about them. . . . Most systems [of philosophy] are tolerably clear until they have been explained.’<sup>1</sup> Modest to the point of self-effacement, he had a clear perception of his own limitations. To the writer he once said, ‘I always know when I’m beat.’

“In one salient characteristic Jeyes was assuredly not ‘beat’ throughout the whole of his undergraduate life. The buoyant spirits, which gave the bright sparkle to his wit, and which to the world at large seemed his most attractive quality, were ever at the high-water mark, and ready to overflow.

<sup>1</sup> *Entrance Classical Scholarships*, p. 43.

Fun depends so much upon circumstance that its flavour usually passes with the occasion by which it was provoked ; but the following incident, slight as it is, may serve to reflect Jeyes in his habitual mood. Charles Gore, now Bishop of Oxford, had just been elected to a Fellowship at Trinity, where his affectionate disposition endeared him to us all. Gore was then a philosophic enthusiast with an immense admiration for T. H. Green, and he came out of Balliol one morning, his face aglow with pleasure, a pamphlet in his hand, which he swung to and fro in accompaniment to his long strides. Jeyes and the writer met him at the Trinity porter's lodge. 'I say, you fellows,' beamed Gore, brimming over with delight, 'Tommy Green's given me a sermon !' 'What !' jerked out Jeyes in his incisive way, 'can't he sell them ?' 'You brute !' returned the indignant Gore, and passed on to his rooms. 'I seem rather to have upset Gore,' chuckled Jeyes. Here is an example of his readiness in retort. Talk fell upon feminine morality, and Jeyes had made a cynical remark which affronted a choleric gentleman present. 'My dear Jeyes,' called out the affronted one with some heat, 'your mind is a sewer !' 'If so,' returned Jeyes promptly, 'you're floating down it !'

“ ‘Oxford's a delightful place when all the undergraduates are away,' said Jeyes on one occasion, when he had remained at College to work during an Easter



vacation. But, in truth, a more sociable mortal did not exist, and hence it came about that all the boon companions of his own standing were commoners, chiefly 'wet bobs,' who forgot to worry about schools in their *joie de vivre*.<sup>1</sup> I cannot recall a single day when 'old Jeyes' was out of health or out of form. He was fond of billiards, but only as a pastime; his usual smoke was a pipe, with Cavenish tobacco for choice; and he enjoyed a glass of port, which was the fashionable Oxford tippie of the time. I believe he did no literary work during his undergraduate days, being fully occupied with his preparation for the schools; but the bias of his mind was towards a literary career, and his appointment to a classical lectureship at University College soon after he had taken his degree gave him welcome opportunity for a start in letters. His first published books were translations from Latin.

"Let it be said as a last word of Jeyes that, while we admired him for his clever head, we loved him for his warm heart. He was sympathetic in a remarkable degree. Nothing mean or unkind was possible to him; nothing pleased him more than the chance of doing a kind act. For instance, he strolled down to the billiard-room one afternoon,

<sup>1</sup> Among them may be specially named: T. C. Burrowes, A. B. Cartwright, C. Stone Wigg, R. J. Rhys, and the present writer. The three last named rowed in the Trin. Coll. Eight of '78, and Burrowes in the University Eight of '79.

found the marker out of sorts, sent the man to a doctor forthwith, and paid the doctor's fee. Not a few young men might have done the same, had the thought come to them. The distinction between them and Jeyes is simply that the thought always *did* come to him, and to act upon it was with him a matter of course. A bright, kindly, human, humorous soul—that is the image before me as I cast my thoughts back upon the memory of my old friend in those brave days that are gone.”

Jeyes took his second class in the Final School of *Lit. Humaniores* in the summer of 1879, having previously gained a first in classical Moderations. His capacity as a scholar was recognised by the authorities, and he was offered a lectureship in classics at University College. He held this post for a couple of years, combining with his college work a good deal of private coaching for pass and honour “mods.” He was an excellent and sympathetic teacher, and if he had remained at Oxford, he would probably have had a successful career as a coach and college tutor. But the life was uncongenial to him. The atmosphere of the Common-room was not to his taste, there was never anything of the don about him, and his genial ways and unconventional habits of speech were not quite easily trimmed to the strict academic measure. He told me that once, when he was riding on the Woodstock road, his horse was startled by a clerical-

looking gentleman on a bicycle. Jeyes, who hated bicyclists, gave the performer a few of his choicest flowers of speech. In the hurry of the moment he failed to observe that the recipient of these favours was a dignitary of the college to which he was attached. Such episodes may have helped to convince him that he was not marked out for the life tutorial. At any rate, he decided to leave the University, and to play such part as might be allotted him on a larger stage.

Quitting Oxford, then, in 1883, Jeyes settled down to try his fortunes in the world of London. His ostensible profession was that of the law. He had kept his terms while at the University, and was called to the Bar. He now took a share of some chambers in the Temple ; he read with a barrister, attended the Courts with some assiduity, and went on circuit. I have always regretted that he did not, or could not, devote himself with undivided aims to the only profession which is worth an able man's attention in modern England. If he had made a fair start at the Bar, I see no reason why he should not have attained considerable success. With his acute intelligence, his wide knowledge of the world, his insight into character and motive, his genial presence, his ready wit, and his persuasive manner, he should have impressed judges, conciliated juries, and played like lambent flame round reluctant witnesses.

But he had no interest with solicitors, and no useful mercantile connection. The briefs did not come, and Jeyes was little disposed to wait for them through that grim interval of unremunerated persistency which lies across the path of so many young barristers. He continued to do a little coaching and teaching in these first years of London life, and he published some books. They dealt with the subjects with which he was then most familiar—classics and the teaching of the classics. The best of these works, in some ways the best of all his works, is his prose translation of the Satires of Juvenal, with a long Introductory Essay. The task was thoroughly congenial to him ; for he knew Juvenal better than any other ancient writer. No one could be more fitted to appreciate that prince of satirists and journalistic rhetoricians than Jeyes, who looked at the men and women about him with something of Juvenal's keen and minute observation, though with little of the *sæva indignatio* which drove the Roman to exaggeration and extravagance. He heartily enjoyed Juvenal, but he was not blind to his defects ; and his essay is an uncommon piece of sane, just, and sagacious criticism. Here in brief compass is the sum of much reading and thinking :

“ There is one special reason why we must not take Rome at Juvenal's valuation. He seems to have no sense of proportion between the evils which he describes ; so that his invective ‘ wants finish ! ’ He comes down with the same

heavy hand upon mere affectations or fooleries as upon downright wickedness. Using Greek phrases is made out to be as bad as practising Greek vices ; and it is not quite in jest when he says that Nero's worst crime was his perpetration of a poem. Sometimes he condemns things which seem to us innocent enough, such as over-indulgence in athletics, or a refinement in iced drinks. Curiously enough, his bitter censure of a young nobleman's taste for driving may be paralleled by the strictures which were passed on the Prince Regent for 'driving his own curricle in the Park.' But Juvenal was not a sportsman, nor was he quite a gentleman ; else he would have seen nothing derogatory in a young nobleman looking after his horses for himself when he had brought them to the stables. Again, when he describes the impudence of petted slaves and the importance of confidential servants, he seems blind to the fact that the severity of Roman slavery was greatly mitigated by the prospects, which lay open to every clever or faithful slave, of making a career for himself and winning his way to freedom. If Juvenal wishes to condemn a master or mistress for cruelty to dependants, he is ready enough to assert the innate equality of all men, the rights of common flesh and blood ; but he forgets his humanitarianism except when it is employed to shame the privileged objects of his satire. So with the Greek adventurers who supplanted Roman retainers in the favour of their patrons, he dwells only upon the vile arts which some of them used, and says little of the sterling ability which must have been the chief source of their success. Poetically and rhetorically, he is justified in only drawing attention to that aspect of every question which supports his case ; but it is just because he is both a poet and rhetorician that we must discount his views and sift his statements."

The young scholar who could write like this had in him the makings of a great critic. But the *Juvenal* passed unmarked by the literary world. It was only a school text-book, and nobody except tutors and teachers (mostly inarticulate human beings outside their class-rooms) takes much notice of school text-books.

From the publishers Jeyes drifted naturally to the Press, the obvious resource of the young man of literary tastes and culture anxious to earn money. It was a resource even more obvious in the mid-eighties than it is now. In those days the writing journalist was at the zenith of his power and prosperity. The news-editor was still a subordinate functionary; the reporter had hardly yet emerged from being the pedestrian chronicler of events which had "transpired"; the whole army of managers, organizers, publicity-agents, specialists, who are the brains and soul of the latter-day newspaper, was hardly existent. The Press set most store upon the man who could write, the commentator upon affairs, the publicist, the essayist, the critic. Its editors paid what their successors would consider excessive and misdirected attention to composition and style; it had not outgrown its superstitious regard for the literary and academic tradition; it believed, in that distant and artless world, that a university degree, and some familiarity with the classical tongues, contributed to journalistic

excellence; it wasted its resources with reckless prodigality upon leader-writers and reviewers. There were many more periodicals than there are now which depended mainly upon the written "article," with its appeal to an educated, and somewhat leisurely, public. Thus a young Oxford man, with the proper credentials, able to write fluently and smoothly, could soon find a footing. Jeyes began in the usual way by planting occasional contributions in various likely quarters. He got himself printed from time to time in the *Saturday Review*, in those days still famous and brilliant and munificent; in the two literary evening journals that had risen from the ashes of the first *Pall Mall Gazette*; in the "society" papers, and others. "I am sending about a foot of rubbish weekly to the — *Review*," he wrote to a friend in 1887, "besides other things." In his third year in London he had grown tolerably busy with work of this kind. He had abandoned his coaching, and was paying, I think, but little attention to his frigid and uncertain mistress, the Law.

It was at this period that he and I came into close association. In the autumn of 1888 I was called upon to become editor of the *St. James's Gazette*, in succession to Frederick Greenwood, greatest of all the journalists who had essayed to wed journalism with literature. Jeyes had been one of his occasional contributors; and when the

change occurred he came to see me, and expressed his desire to write more regularly for the paper. I acceded willingly enough, for I was attracted by his brightness, his good-humour, and his evident knowledge of men and things. I told him I was in search of an assistant-editor, who could write well and take control in my absence ; and I asked him if he happened to know of any capable young man, preferably from Oxford or Cambridge, who would be fit for the post. "Wouldn't I do?" asked Jeyes, without a moment's hesitation. I replied at once that I believed he would "do" uncommonly well. But I told him that the *St James's*, though it had a considerable reputation at the time, and was really influential, was not in a very flourishing condition financially, and that the salary it could afford to offer was probably too moderate to tempt a man of his position and attainments. Besides, I had seen enough of journalism by that time to know that it can give little more to the vast majority of those who addict themselves to it than a limited, and often a precarious, livelihood, gained by arduous, and usually obscure, toil. I pointed out to Jeyes that he might do better to stick to the Bar, however unpromising the immediate outlook appeared. He asked for a couple of days to consider the matter. At the end of that period he came to me, and said that he would gladly accept the post. He was not, I



think, really interested in the law; he was tired of the irregularity and uncertainty of his position; and he wanted fixed hours of work and a fixed income. So he discarded his wig and gown (his wig-box as a receptacle of whisky and cigars long adorned his editorial office for a sign unto all men that he had definitely "cut the Bar"), erased his name from the door in the Temple, and turned seriously to the business which occupied him for the remainder of his days, and the larger proportion of his nights.

We worked together on the *St. James's* for over three years, and during that space I saw him daily and hourly. It is an association to which I look back now with a certain wistful pleasure. On the whole I think we both enjoyed those busy years together in the little office in Dorset Street, though they were years not unchequered by anxieties and trials of one kind and another. But the worries slipped lightly from our shoulders. We were both young; we were both intensely interested in the great movements of the intellectual and political world, on which, in our adolescent self-confidence, we believed ourselves to exercise no mean influence; we appreciated our opportunities of coming into frequent contact with great figures in politics and letters; and we thoroughly enjoyed the brisk bustle of the newspaper office and the exhilarating task of bringing out four or five editions daily.

The *St. James's* had a position of its own in those days. Its circulation was what would now be called contemptibly small; but its influence was out of all proportion to the number of copies sold. It was distinctly the organ of the "governing classes," and it was read by them with a reverential attention which always surprised, and sometimes amused, me. As its news service was never really good it depended almost entirely upon the strength and quality of its writing, and the character of its comments on men and affairs. Its leading article, to which Greenwood had devoted an excessive amount of attention, had become one of the features of the London Press; and even in my own less robust hands, a single "leader" in the *St. James's Gazette* could sometimes do more to affect the course of legislation or the opinions of statesmen than a whole series of special articles and exciting news "stories" in the huge and powerful journals of a later day. Our staff, too, at this period might be called remarkable. J. M. Barrie, Rudyard Kipling, Andrew Lang, Edmund Gosse, George Saintsbury, Gilbert Parker, Anthony Hope Hawkins, H. D. Traill, David Hannay, Mrs. Lynn Linton, Herbert Stephen, and his brother Jim, then in the fullest blaze of his short-lived brilliancy, with other notable men and women of letters, were among our regular or occasional contributors. The handling of this team, and the selection of suitable topics on which they

could employ their talents, involved a good deal of editorial and critical work, of a kind that falls less frequently to the editor of a modern newspaper, concerned, as he must be, with so many interests of an entirely different nature.

In all this Jeyes was the most valuable and competent of coadjutors. His own judgment always leaned to sanity and moderation, whereas mine, I am afraid, was too often inclined to erratic experiment. Jeyes was the conservative force in the office, and I was constantly indebted to the shrewd restraint he exercised over my tendency towards hasty, and sometimes sentimental, innovation. The subject of the daily leader was a matter for close discussion between us in the early hours of the morning ; and I seldom rose from these little confabulations without being impressed by the clear and logical judgment and the independent thought which my friend usually brought to bear upon the events of the hour. He often wrote leaders himself, and his work was always sound and capably expressed ; and in the Occasional Notes he found scope for his talent for epigram, and for an occasional sparkle of his caustic humour.

The editing of an evening paper is a restless, irritating kind of business, which offers many occasions for setting sensitive teeth on edge, and gives frequent opportunity for friction. Jeyes had

a temper of his own, which would flame out on provocation, and relieve itself by speech of quite unusual directness and force. But he kept a careful restraint upon it, particularly in his professional work, and in all the years of our close, and at times our trying, association, I cannot remember that we had even the beginnings of a quarrel. This, I am sure, was due to his forbearance much more than mine; for I was, I believe, a fidgety young man, somewhat over-burdened by the sense of my responsibilities, and I know that I was not altogether popular with some members of my staff. There was, indeed, a certain amount of squabbling and jealousy in the office; but all the rival parties and factions agreed in liking and trusting the assistant-editor.

Our situation was, in some respects, difficult. The paper, with the retirement of Greenwood, had passed into the possession of a proprietor who was not an easy person to work with. A North German by birth, though a naturalised Englishman, he exhibited in full measure some of the less attractive features of the Prussian character. With a Bismarckian physique, and conspicuous practical capacity, he had a preference, even in the intercourse of social life, for the methods of blood and iron; and the mailed fist was, in his case, seldom hidden under a glove of velvet. Fortune had played him the ill turn of making him an enormously

wealthy man before he was middle-aged, and had completely spoilt his temper in the process. With a moderate income and a comfortable suburban home, he might have been a happy, and even an agreeable, individual ; with a mansion in a fashionable square, a costly collection of mostly ill-chosen pictures, and an unfulfilled aspiration after social distinction, he was exceedingly uncomfortable, and his discomfort expressed itself in aggressive onslaughts upon his connections and dependents. Personally, I liked him, for I appreciated his practical ability, his genuine, though too often misdirected, force of character, and a sort of cross-grained humour and elemental kindness which underlay his arrogant manner. I believe he had a certain regard for me too, though we were constantly quarrelling. About once a fortnight he would surge into the office, genial as an October gale, for a tempestuous interview with his editor, which frequently ended in resignation being proffered on the one side, and declined, with suitable apologies, on the other. After this interlude, he would drift away for a few soothing words with the manager upon the unnecessary expense of office stationery and postage stamps. But before he left, he would find his way to Jeyes's room, where his tormented spirit would be assuaged by a selection of racy anecdotes, and he would depart chuckling and temporarily at peace. Nobody could "get on" for

very long with this able and self-assertive gentleman, though I endured him longer than most. After I left editors and managers rose and fell like presidents in a Central American republic. But our friend had an almost exaggerated regard for Jeyes's capacity, and for his shrewd knowledge of the world, so different, as he sometimes courteously explained to me, from my own. When I retired from the *St. James's* Jeyes was tempted with munificent offers to become my successor. But he had other views at the time, and he knew this able proprietor much too well to be anxious for closer association with him.

The persistent accord which prevailed between Jeyes and myself was all the more creditable since we did not always see eye to eye in politics and in various other matters. We had both been Liberals in our younger days, and we had left the party at the great secession over Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill. Neither of us would have called ourselves Tories, and we both fell back, like so many dissentient Liberals, on the useful non-committal appellation of Liberal-Unionist. For myself, however, I was, and always have been, a persistent, though not perhaps a consistent, "mugwump," with a tendency at that time to what was then called Tory-Democracy. I was young enough to cherish the illusion, which appears from age to age only to be shattered by the stern blast of events, that a party

of the people might be created which should be democratic and progressive in its aims, but constitutionalist and imperialist in its methods. Jeyes, however, after his early plunge into Radicalism, developed into what I should call an old-fashioned Benthamite, with distinctly aristocratic leanings. John Stuart Mill had been one of his favourite authors at school and college, and he never quite emancipated himself from the classic tenets of orthodox Liberalism. He believed in free contract, individualism, self-help, private enterprise, and the strict limitation of the power of the State.

But a man's politics are much more a matter of temperament than reason, and by temperament, as he settled down from youth to middle-age, Jeyes became strongly, and even dogmatically, conservative. He liked the people, but he did not believe in them. He distrusted their hasty impulses, their emotionalism, above all their ignorance. Nobody saw more clearly than himself the weaknesses and the defects of the English governing classes, the aristocracy and the country gentlemen.<sup>1</sup> But all the same, it was to those classes, enlightened by a larger view of life, and broadened by a more liberal culture, that he looked mainly for social and political salvation. He was conservative, also, in his dislike

<sup>1</sup> See the extract given below, p. 199, from Jeyes's *Fortnightly Review* article on "Our Gentlemanly Failures."

for rapid innovation and violent change. He was reluctant, without good cause, to abandon the old ways, the recognized order, the rules which had been tested by experience, the established orthodoxy.

A good deal of this, I am free to confess, was due to personal predilection, in some degree perhaps to personal prejudice. He had an almost physical shrinking from vulgarity, eccentricity, and blatant defiance of usage and precedent. If he estimated the products of our public school and university system at their true value, he liked, all the same, to associate with them. He preferred to have gentlemen and ladies for his friends, and he had no patience with people who did not know how to behave properly, or to enjoy the amenities of a polite and cultured world.

It was, however, a deep and earnest conviction, much more than sentiment or inclination, which caused him to hold aloft so steadfastly the banner of regularity, order, and good taste. He waged strenuous warfare against the fads and freaks which were shooting through the intellectual and artistic atmosphere in the last decade of the nineteenth century. For Yellow-Bookism, Walter-Paterism, æstheticism, and all the other "isms" and cults sprouting so bounteously from the soil at that period, he had no indulgence. Nor could he look with patience on the humanitarianism, often



expressing itself in extravagant forms, which was also then coming into vogue. My democratic tendencies sometimes hurt his feelings. I remember one morning he came down to the office almost dancing with indignation over something he had seen in the daily papers. "Look at this," he said to me fiercely, pointing at a printed column; "did you ever see anything like it?" What had roused him was a proposal brought forward by a member of the London School Board that pianos should be provided in the elementary schools at the expense of the ratepayers. To me, who am rather of the opinion that no day-labourer's home where there is a wife and children should be allowed by law to remain without a piano, this proposition did not seem reprehensible; but Jeyes was furious. "Pianos," he said angrily; "why not diamonds and Paris gowns?" And he went on to describe to me, with a fullness of knowledge I did not think he possessed, the conditions which existed in the homes of some of the children receiving instruction under the London School Board. "What can be the use," he asked, "of teaching the scales to children who are perishing for want of good clothing and proper food?" He spoke with so much warmth and feeling that I was, for the time at least, convinced, and at any rate I decided to let him have his head. He sat down and wrote a leading article, with the heading, "Is Mr. — a Myth?" in

which he proceeded to argue, with great humour and satire, that the gentleman in question could have no existence, and that the whole story must be a *canard*, since it was quite impossible for any intelligent human being, in that year of grace, to be so inconceivably ignorant of the conditions which prevail among the poor as to bring forward such an absurd and impracticable proposal.

In this there was, no doubt, a certain measure of Philistinism; but it was Philistinism of a manly, wholesome kind, based upon a sound scholarship and a generous view of life; and it had its uses at a time when there was a good deal of affectation and morbidity in the intellectual atmosphere. The *fin-de-siècle* decadence, made fashionable by one man of genius and a number of clever or cleverish imitators, was assailed by Jeyes with a sturdy Johnsonian bludgeon. His most effective achievement in this kind was his onslaught upon Oscar Wilde's famous *Picture of Dorian Gray*. The story, in its original form, first appeared in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, in June, 1890. I handed it over to Jeyes, who put on his heaviest fighting gloves, and punished the author and the book, with science as well as strength, in a review printed in the *St. James's* on June 24th, 1890. This brilliant piece of slashing criticism is characteristic enough to be worth reproduction almost in full:

"Time was (it was in the '70's) when we talked about

Mr. Oscar Wilde ; time came (it came in the '80's) when he tried to write poetry and, more adventurous, we tried to read it ; time is when we had forgotten him, or only remember him as the late editor of *The Woman's World*—a part for which he was singularly unfitted, if we are to judge him by the work which he has been allowed to publish in *Lippincott's Magazine*, and which Messrs. Ward, Lock, and Co. have not been ashamed to circulate in Great Britain. Not being curious in ordure, and not wishing to offend the nostrils of decent persons, we do not propose to analyse *The Picture of Dorian Gray* ; that would be to advertise the developments of an esoteric prurience.

. . . . .

“ The puzzle is that a young man of decent parts, who enjoyed, when he was at Oxford, the opportunity of associating with gentlemen, should put his name (such as it is) to so stupid and vulgar a piece of work. Let nobody read it in the hope of finding witty paradox or racy wickedness. The writer airs his cheap research among the garbage of the French *Décadents* like any drivelling pedant, and he bores you unmercifully with his prosy rigmaroles about the beauty of the Body and the corruption of the Soul. The grammar is better than Ouida's ; the erudition equal ; but in every other respect we prefer the talented lady who broke off with ‘ pious aposiopesis ’ when she touched upon the ‘ horrors which are described in the pages of Suetonius and Livy ’—not to mention the yet worse infamies believed by many scholars to be accurately portrayed in the lost works of Plutarch, Venus, and Nicodemus, especially Nicodemus.

“ Let us take one peep at the young men in Mr. Oscar Wilde's story. Puppy No. 1 is the painter of the picture of Dorian Gray ; Puppy No. 2 is the critic (a courtesy lord, skilled in all the knowledge of the Egyptians and aweary of

all the sins and pleasures of London); Puppy No. 3 is the original, cultivated by Puppy No. 1 with a 'romantic friendship.' The Puppies fall a-talking: Puppy No. 1 about his Art, Puppy No. 2 about his sins and pleasures and the pleasures of sin, and Puppy No. 3 about himself—always about himself, and generally about his face, which is 'brainless and beautiful.' The Puppies appear to fill up the intervals of talk by plucking daisies and playing with them, and sometimes by drinking 'something with strawberry in it.' The youngest Puppy is told that he is charming; but he mustn't sit in the sun for fear of spoiling his complexion. When he is rebuked for being a naughty, wilful boy, he makes a pretty *moue*—this man of twenty! This is how he is addressed by the Blasé Puppy at their first meeting:

"'Yes, Mr. Gray, the gods have been good to you. But what the gods give they quickly take away. . . . Time is jealous of you, and wars against your lilies and roses. You will become sallow, and hollow-cheeked, and dull-eyed. You will suffer horribly.'

"Why, bless our souls! haven't we read something of this kind somewhere in the classics? Yes, of course we have! But in what recondite author? Ah—yes—no—yes, it *was* in Horace! What an advantage it is to have received a classical education! And how it will astonish the Yankees! But we must not forget our Puppies, who have probably occupied their time in lapping 'something with strawberry in it.' Puppy No. 1 (the Art Puppy) has been telling Puppy No. 3 (the Doll Puppy) how much he admires him. What is the answer? 'I am less to you than your ivory Hermes or your silver Faun. You will like them always. How long will you like me? Till I have my first wrinkle, I suppose. I know now that when one loses one's good looks, whatever they may be, one loses everything. . . . I am jealous of the portrait you have painted of me. Why should it keep what I must

lose ? . . . Oh, if it was only the other way ! If the picture could only change, and I could be always what I am now !’

“No sooner said than done ! The picture *does* change ; the original doesn’t. Here’s a situation for you ! Théophile Gautier could have made it romantic, entrancing, beautiful. Mr. Stevenson could have made it convincing, humorous, pathetic. Mr. Anstey could have made it screamingly funny. It has been reserved for Mr. Oscar Wilde to make it dull and nasty. The promising youth plunges into every kind of mean depravity, and ends in being ‘cut’ by fast women and vicious men. He finishes with murder ; the New Voluptuousness always leads up to blood-shedding—that is part of the cant. And every wickedness or filthiness committed by Dorian Gray is faithfully registered upon his face in the picture ; but his living features are undisturbed and unmarred by his inward vileness. This is the story which Mr. Oscar Wilde has tried to tell ; a very lame story it is, and very lamely it is told.

“Why has he told it ? There are two explanations ; and, so far as we can see, not more than two. Not to give pleasure to his readers ; the thing is too clumsy, too tedious, and—alas ! that we should say it—too stupid. Perhaps it was to shock his readers, in order that they might cry Fie ! upon him and talk about him.

. . . . .

“Are we then to suppose that Mr. Oscar Wilde has yielded to the craving for a notoriety which he once earned by talking fiddle-faddle about other men’s art, and sees his only chance of recalling it by making himself obvious at the cost of being obnoxious, and by attracting the notice which the olfactory sense cannot refuse to the presence of certain self-asserting organisms ? That is an uncharitable hypothesis, and we would gladly abandon it. It may be suggested

(but is it more charitable ?) that he derives pleasure from treating a subject merely because it is disgusting. The phenomenon is not unknown in recent literature ; and it takes two forms, in appearance widely separate—in fact, two branches from the same root, a root which draws its life from malodorous putrefaction. One development is found in the Puritan prurience which produced Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata* and Mr. Stead's famous outbursts. That is odious enough and mischievous enough, and it is rightly execrated, because it is tainted with an hypocrisy not the less culpable because charitable persons may believe it to be unconscious. But is it more odious or more mischievous than the ' frank Paganism ' (that is the word, is it not ?) which delights in dirtiness and confesses its delight ? Still they are both chips from the same block—*The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*—and both of them ought to be chucked into the fire. Not so much because they are dangerous and corrupt (they are corrupt but not dangerous), as because they are incurably silly, written by simple *poseurs* (whether they call themselves Puritan or Pagan), who know nothing about the life which they affect to have explored, and because they are mere catchpenny revelations of the non-existent, which, if they reveal anything at all, are revelations only of the singularly unpleasant minds from which they emerge."

I should not have written this criticism myself, nor did I wholly agree with it ; but it was a point of view that was quite advisable to bring forward at the time, and it appealed to many people who were heartily glad to see the assertive decadent school so faithfully handled. Wilde felt the criticism acutely ; for he knew very well that if his

assailant's blows were rough, they were planted with skill, and that they had got home where he was weakest. Two days afterwards he attempted to mollify the *St. James's* with a rather mildly-worded remonstrance, in which he protested against the imputation that his story had been written to advertise himself; and the following day (June 27th, 1890) he attempted a more elaborate defence. In this he said that the writer of the review "was incapable of concealing his personal malice," and so had destroyed the effect he wished to produce. He then proceeded to vindicate his conception and treatment of the theme he had selected:

"Romantic art deals with the exception and with the individual. Good people, belonging as they do to the normal, and so, commonplace, type, are artistically uninteresting. Bad people are, from the point of view of art, fascinating studies. They represent colour, variety, and strangeness. Good people exasperate one's reason; bad people stir one's imagination. Your critic, if I must give him so honourable a title, states that the people in my story have no counterpart in life; that they are, to use his vigorous if somewhat vulgar phrase, 'mere catchpenny revelations of the non-existent.' Quite so. If they existed they would not be worth writing about. The function of the artist is to invent, not to chronicle. There are no such people. If there were I would not write about them. Life by its realism is always spoiling the subject-matter of art.

. . . . .

"The poor public, hearing from an authority so high as

your own, that this is a wicked book that should be coerced and suppressed by a Tory Government, will, no doubt, rush to it and read it. But, alas ! they will find that it is a story with a moral. And the moral is this : All excess, as well as all renunciation, brings its own punishment.

“The painter, Basil Hallward, worshipping physical beauty far too much, as most painters do, dies by the hand of one in whose soul he has created a monstrous and absurd vanity. Dorian Gray, having led a life of mere sensation and pleasure, tries to kill conscience, and at that moment kills himself. Lord Henry Wotton seeks to be merely the spectator of life. He finds that those who reject the battle are more deeply wounded than those who take part in it.

“Yes ; there is a terrible moral in *Dorian Gray*—a moral which the prurient will not be able to find in it, but which will be revealed to all whose minds are healthy. Is this an artistic error ? I fear it is. It is the only error in the book.”

I told Jeyes that as he had drawn this upon us he had better reply to it, which he did with gusto. Mr. Oscar Wilde (he said in an editorial note, which we appended to the letter)

“may perhaps be excused for being angry at the remarks which we allowed ourselves to make concerning his moral tale of the Three Puppies and the Magic Picture ; but he should not misrepresent us. He says we suggested that his novel was a wicked book which should be coerced and suppressed by a Tory Government. We did nothing of the kind. The authors of books of much less questionable character have been proceeded against by the Treasury or the Vigilance Society ; but we expressly said that we hoped Mr. Wilde’s masterpiece would be left alone.



“ Then Mr. Wilde (like any young lady who has published her first novel at the request of numerous friends) falls back on the theory of the critic’s personal malice. This is unworthy of so experienced a literary gentleman. We can assure Mr. Wilde that the writer of that article had, and has, no personal malice or personal feeling towards him. We can surely censure a work which we believe to be silly, and know to be offensive, without the imputation of malice—especially when that book is written by one who is so clearly capable of better things.

“ As for the critical question, Mr. Wilde is beating the air when he defends idealism and ‘ romantic art ’ in literature. In the words of Mrs. Harris to Mrs. Gamp, ‘ Who’s a-deniging of it ? ’

“ Heaven forbid that we should refuse to an author the ‘ supreme pleasure of realising the non-existent ’ ; or that we should judge the ‘ æsthetic ’ from the purely ‘ ethical ’ standpoint.

“ No ; our criticism starts from lower ground. Mr. Wilde says that his story is a moral tale, because the wicked persons in it come to a bad end. We will not be so rude as to quote a certain remark about morality which one Mr. Charles Surface made to Mr. Joseph Surface. We simply say that every critic has the right to point out that a work of art or literature is dull and incompetent in its treatment—as *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is ; and that its dullness and incompetence are not redeemed because it constantly hints, not obscurely, at disgusting sins and abominable crimes—as *The Picture of Dorian Gray* does.”

Wilde returned to the encounter with further communications, to which Jeyes responded with the same trenchant and logical directness. The

*Daily Chronicle*, Henley and Charles Whibley in the *Scots Observer*, and other journals and journalists, took up the controversy,<sup>1</sup> and Wilde retired from the contest with his original aggressor. Before that he had come down to the office to state his case personally. He told me that he had no feeling of animosity against the author of the review, whose culture and honesty he respected, and that he would like to talk with him. I brought in Jeyes; and Wilde argued at considerable length, and employed all the resources of his persuasive manner and abounding wit to bring over his formidable critic. Jeyes, however, refused to be mollified. "What is the use," he said, "of writing of, and hinting at, things you do not mean?" "I assure you," replied Oscar earnestly, "I mean every word I have said, and everything at which I have hinted, in *Dorian Gray*." "Then all I can say," answered Jeyes grimly, "is that if you *do* mean them, you are very likely to find yourself at Bow Street one of these days." I thought of that shrewd warning, and the light laugh with which Wilde greeted it, often enough afterwards when the saddest tragedy of modern English literature was enacted, and "the beacon's light was quenched in

<sup>1</sup> The various newspaper articles, including those in the *St. James's Gazette*, with Wilde's letters and the editorial comments on them, have been collected and reprinted in a little book entitled *Art and Morality*, published in 1907, and reissued in 1912.

smoke," the murky and mephitic vapours of the Central Criminal Court.

Our close association at the *St. James's* ended in May, 1891, when Jeyes was offered, and accepted, the assistant-editorship of the *Standard*. He left the little office in Dorset Street with regret; but the post at Shoe Lane was too important to be refused. To the *Standard* his main energies were devoted till (in a quite literal sense) the day of his death; for he was correcting proofs for the paper a few hours before he passed away. The *Standard*, when Jeyes joined its staff, was at the height of its influence and prosperity. After a long and chequered career, during which it had experienced many vicissitudes of fortune, it had been steadily built up, under the sagacious and capable management of Mr. W. H. Mudford, into one of the finest properties of the English newspaper world. It had a large circulation, a very lucrative advertising connection, and an almost unequalled reputation for weight, stability, and soundness. It was the special organ of the well-to-do middle-classes, and of the great solid, mercantile, manufacturing, and trading interests. Its news service, if it lacked the enterprise and sparkle of some of its contemporaries, was deemed exceptionally trustworthy; it paid great attention to foreign affairs, and vied with the *Times* as the representative of English opinion for the financiers and publicists of the Continent; and its leading articles

were considered with profound attention in thousands of the most respectable households throughout the kingdom. Lord Palmerston's "man in a white hat on the knife-board of an omnibus" took his politics largely from the *Standard*; so did the man in the Conservative clubs, and the man in the first-class railway carriage. It was, in fact, a great power in those days, and if its artillery was sometimes a little slow on the march it was undoubtedly effective. When the *Standard* chose to bring all its guns into action to attack some cause or personality, which it did but seldom for it had a sedate dislike for superfluous activity, it could breach the strongest fortress.

To the service of this influential journal Jeyes gave ungrudgingly of his best for twenty years. The work was arduous and responsible, but I believe he found it from the first congenial. The *Standard* was strictly anonymous, and Jeyes liked anonymity. He cared nothing for the show of power; but he enjoyed the consciousness of it. To remain unknown to the general public, and the paragraphists of the Press, did not trouble him in the least; but it pleased him to feel that he wielded an influence over the men who were really "doing things," and over the things they did. He found an artistic delight in bringing to bear the solid impact of the great engine he helped to control upon the plastic mass of public opinion. He was interested in the varied

phases of journalistic activity which came before him, whether he were interviewing a Cabinet Minister on some delicate international question, or mollifying an exasperated printer struggling with belated copy, or making sense of cryptic telegrams from St. Petersburg and Vienna, or toning down the exuberancies of descriptive reporters and dramatic critics. He enjoyed the details of newspaper management, and read manuscripts, corrected proofs, and conducted correspondence, with unwearied assiduity. Many sides of human nature came before him, and he met them all with the same surface cynicism, the same broad and kindly comprehension, and the same blunt directness of speech. He could always lighten work with a jest, and sweeten it with an act of kindness. One evening an indoor messenger, in some fit of despondency, was discovered making an abortive attempt to cut his throat with a blunt table-knife. There was much excitement, instant notice of dismissal for the culprit, and flurried proposals to send for the police. Jeyes intervened and vetoed all such action. He said that if the lad were sent away, or brought before the magistrate, he would be ruined, and would be sure to commit suicide in earnest, sooner or later. At the office he would be among friends and comrades, who could keep an eye upon him, and would make him heartily ashamed of his foolishness. Even so was it done ; the young man remained at his work, which

he did very well, and gave nobody, so far as I know, any further cause for anxiety. A life which might have gone to wreck was redeemed and rendered useful by Jeyes's practical good sense and good-nature.

To the paper itself his attitude was rather like that of the Duke of Wellington towards the administration of the country. "The Queen's Government must be carried on." He regarded the *Standard* as a kind of national institution, so valuable that it ought to be maintained and kept at its best level of usefulness, even at a heavy sacrifice of private interests and personal feelings. He worked under four different editors, very different in character and temperament, with the same soldier-like loyalty, doing an immense amount of hard work for each, and always with a strict and disciplined fidelity. Withal he retained his independence, and never hesitated to express himself very plainly when he thought the wrong thing was being done. Anybody who took liberties with him was apt to get a quick and awkward riposte. An aristocratic and haughty young under-secretary of state, from whom he was endeavouring to elicit some information, said to him, "Do you suppose I am here to answer the questions of newspaper reporters?" "I don't know what you are here for," replied Jeyes, "but I know I am not here to stand impudence from any — jack-in-office." The noble lord collapsed and apologized. One of his

editors had a fussy way of invariably altering the opening sentence of his contributors' articles. Jeyes cured him of the habit by sending in his copy with the first half of the opening sentence left blank. He had a great objection to being unfairly treated, and angrily resented any attempt to "do" him; and in spite of his habitual placidity he was a formidable opponent when fairly roused. I recall a little adventure that occurred when we were once together in the Casino at Dieppe, and a croupier at the roulette-table refused to pay him some money which he had won, or thought he had won. The official curtly repudiated the claim, and evidently considered the incident closed. It was not. Jeyes slowly heaved himself up from his seat, leaned both arms upon the table, dropped his somewhat hesitating French, and in very loud and emphatic English demanded his money. The startled croupier paused just long enough to throw a glance at the burly figure and resolute face confronting him, and then without a word complied with the request. "I should have kicked the table over in another minute," said Jeyes, as he pocketed his francs and turned away.

Though quick, and sometimes indiscreetly frank, in speech, he was extremely cautious in action, and at the *Standard* his influence was always used against hasty experiments or ill-considered, half-thought-out declarations of policy. As time wore

on his conservatism took a stronger tinge, and he became rather a keen party man, though he could always view the conduct and utterances of his own leaders with philosophical detachment. He thought, however, that in a country where the party system prevails it is absurd for a person concerned in active politics to affect complete independence. Better to get something done, even if it is not the best thing possible, than to skirmish ineffectually between the armies and do nothing at all. "England," he said, "was not made by the mugwumps." Apart from this he was, as I have said, really a Conservative by temperament, in his love for order and tradition, his dislike of sciolism, and his distrust of democracy. His political information was accurate and wide, founded on an extensive acquaintance with the memoirs and biographies of the nineteenth century ; and no man read his blue-books and parliamentary papers more carefully. Withal it was the personal side of politics that interested him most. I frequently disagreed with him in his judgment of measures ; but I was always struck by the acuteness of his comments upon men. The best things he wrote for the *Standard* were, I think, the series of Letters to Eminent Persons signed "Friar John," extracts from which are given in this volume.<sup>1</sup> Some of his epigrams are characteristic, as when he gently ascribes to one self-satisfied politician "a

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 75 *sqq.*



certain deficiency in the art of self-measurement," or tells another distinguished personage that he possesses "a temper as genial as can be afforded by a man who has to make his own way in life." There is wit as well as a profound knowledge of the English political temper in the remark that nothing is so hard for a public man to live down as a reputation for facetiousness.

Outside his office, whether in Dorset Street or in Shoe Lane, Jeyes found time to do a good deal of writing. Soon after coming to the *St. James's* he set about a rather elaborate account of the public life of the late Lord Salisbury, which he undertook, I believe, chiefly as a good exercise for a young journalist anxious to gain a mastery over contemporary political history. It was published (in 1894) in four volumes, and issued by one of those firms which sell large illustrated books by subscription, and do not specially court the notice of the literary reviews. Consequently this biography attracted less attention than it deserved; for it is quite an adequate piece of work, accurate and well-written, with much useful information compiled from the newspapers and the parliamentary debates and other official sources. While at the *Standard* Jeyes contributed a good memoir of Lord Rosebery to the series of volumes called "The Prime Ministers of England" (1906). To another series ("Public Men of the Day") he had contributed a

short biography of Mr. Chamberlain in 1896; and in 1903 he published a more elaborate Life of that statesman, on which he expended a considerable amount of labour. A biography of a man still living is not an easy task to accomplish, and there were special difficulties in this case. Nor was Jeyes wholly in sympathy with his subject in all its aspects. But the record of Mr. Chamberlain's public career is set forth judicially and systematically, and the book holds its place as a capable and well-balanced contribution, so far as its scope and limitations permit, to the political history of the later nineteenth century period. Intimate knowledge is shown of the working of the party system, and there are many sagacious and penetrating observations on events and their causes and results. There was no flattery or hero worship in these discriminating pages; but Mr. Chamberlain was pleased with them, and wrote to the author to say so.

“DEAR MR. JEYES,

“I am much obliged to you for a copy of your book. I don't think that a man can criticise his own biography, and I am not certain that he should read it; but I may express my interest in the account of contemporary politics which your book necessarily contains, and my appreciation of the fairness and friendliness with which your task has been executed.

“Believe me,

“Yours very truly,

“J. CHAMBERLAIN.”

Some of the proofs were submitted to the late Mr. Justin McCarthy, who sent the author a note upon a certain important and much-discussed episode, which may be read with interest :

“ Slip twenty-four—about the Kilmainham Treaty—is all right. You can safely let it stand. Later on, where you deal with the Lord Carnarvon negotiations, there is one mistake. The meetings with Lord Carnarvon were in London—not Dublin. There were three interviews in all. I saw Carnarvon for that purpose twice—Parnell only once. Lord Carnarvon sent for me in the first instance through a Conservative member, a friend of his and of mine, who is still in the House of Commons. I had a long talk with Lord Carnarvon. His object was to get an interview with Parnell, which I told him I would do my best to arrange. He told me he was prepared to go as far in the way of Home Rule as Parnell or I wished to go. With some difficulty I induced Parnell to see him ; but the interview took place, and Parnell told me it was most satisfactory to him. Later on I had a second interview with Lord Carnarvon at the house of another Tory friend. He had come over from Dublin, and had been to Hatfield. He told me he had failed, owing to one or two untoward events, in prevailing upon his colleagues to go in for a Home Rule scheme, but he assured me that if he had three months’ time to work it he could have succeeded. Of course I had no way of judging whether he was too sanguine or not.

“ Very truly yours,

“ JUSTIN MCCARTHY.”

In these years neither journalism nor literature took up all his energies, in spite of the industry

with which he laboured at his office and his desk. Soon after coming to the *St. James's* he installed himself in a pleasant suite of bachelor chambers in Jermyn Street, in which he resided till his marriage. In friendship and society he found agreeable relief from the pressure of professional duties. He was a good deal the man about town, and affected to be something of a *viveur*. He was at any rate a welcome guest at some rather exclusive dinner tables and country houses. Lord Curzon, Lord Midleton, Lord Dudley, Lord and Lady Londonderry, Lord and Lady Burghclere, Mr. George Wyndham, and other people notable in the world of politics and society appreciated his humour, his bonhomie, and his sagacious comments on men and affairs. In the early 'nineties he became acquainted with Lady St. Helier, then Lady Jeune; and as a rising political journalist, and a possible future editor of a great daily newspaper, he was naturally received with favour in what was then the most interesting and comprehensive *salon* in London. He was often seen at the dinner-parties and luncheons at Harley Street, where everybody who was anybody, or might become anybody, was in due course to be met. Some of them formed associations with Jeves, which endured to the end of his life. Like Dr. Johnson, he "kept his friendships in repair," not only by many courteous and graceful acts, but by real and considerable expenditure of

time, thought, and money, when these were required.

Many people resorted to him for advice, for they knew that his counsel in all practical affairs was likely to be sound, and that it was certain to be the result of sincere thought and careful consideration. His circle of intimacy included some charming and distinguished feminine figures. All his life he might have been called *l'ami des femmes*, using the words in the best sense ; for he had that genuine and unaffected interest in the personality and psychology of women which seldom fails to awaken their own interest in response. Several ladies, eminent in the literary or the social worlds or in both, consulted Jeyes about their writings or their business affairs or upon subjects more delicate still ; and in his busiest moments he could always find time to help them. He read their manuscripts, gave them valuable hints upon composition and style, supervised their correspondence with publishers and solicitors, and sometimes with troublesome kinsfolk, and generally guided, protected, and petted them with an elder-brotherly solicitude which was gratefully appreciated. One brilliant and successful lady-novelist owed her first attempt in fiction to his encouragement, and has never written a better book than that which she produced under his mentorship. To another clever woman he was the kindest and most intimate of friends for years, and never with-

held his sympathy and aid through vagaries and adventures which were sometimes trying. His attitude towards women was a little Thackerayan and mid-Victorian in its humorous tolerance. Much as he liked them he never, I think, could take them with complete seriousness, or quite got over the feeling that the charm of the dear creatures consisted largely in their delightful inconsequence, their entrancing unreasonableness. He found these traits, to his exceeding enjoyment, even in his learned and literary feminine friends. Among the manuscripts which used to pass through his hands at the *St. James's* were those of a "great lady" whose vigorous style we rather admired. "She doesn't write like a woman," I said. "She spells like one," replied Jeyes.

A lady who gave him much of her confidence was "John Oliver Hobbes," that delightful and gifted Pearl Cragie, genius, saint, woman of the world, and blue-stocking, who irradiated the literary and social life of London for a few brilliant years. Jeyes admired everything about her, except her rather portentous erudition. There was once some talk of her possible marriage to a very distinguished person. "It will be hard work for him," said Jeyes; "he will have to get up all the Early Christian Fathers before the wedding."

In these latest years of the nineteenth century, and those which followed, Jeyes always gave me and

others the impression of being an exceedingly happy man. He was interested in the various activities and amusements of his well-filled days. Although he kept late hours in Fleet Street, he was rather an early riser ; and he was usually to be found sitting down to his breakfast at about nine o'clock. Then perhaps he would go for a stroll along Piccadilly and into the Park ; and I daresay murmur a stanza of Horace, or of our later Horace, to himself as he cast his observant eyes round, and saw how—

“ Our world to-day,  
Tried in the scale, would scarce outweigh  
Your Roman cronies.  
Walk in the Park—you'll seldom fail  
To find a Sybaris on the rail,  
By Lydia's ponies ;  
Or hap on Barrus, wiggled and stayed,  
Ogling some unsuspecting maid.”

He would return to his rooms and read through a dozen newspapers, London, provincial, and foreign, and perhaps glance at a blue-book or parliamentary report or some recent volume of memoirs till it was time for lunch at the Garrick Club. This agreeable circle, which has retained its character of intimacy and friendliness amid the devastation that has fallen upon the club life of London, Jeyes regarded with the affectionate loyalty which the Garrick often inspires among its members. He was at his best when he was regaling the after-luncheon group, gathered in the lounge, with joke, satire, and

piquant gossip. One of his friends, himself a popular and distinguished member of the Garrick, has furnished me with the following Note upon Jeyes in his capacity of club-man :

“The saying that a man may be known by his club is probably truer than most generalisations of the kind.

“One would not consult a member of the Athenæum upon a matter of racing lore, and if one wanted to find Sydney Scaper, and did not know his club, I rather think we should look in at the Oxford and Cambridge about dinner time, on the chance of finding him still ‘simpering over the *Quarterly Review* in the blameless enjoyment of his half pint of port.’

“The Garrick was certainly Jeyes’s favourite haunt. It has always been a popular resort among literary men. The reason is not far to seek. It is one of the few clubs which has successfully maintained the tradition of easy and friendly companionship, based upon the assumption, so heretical to the old-fashioned clubman, that a fellow-member may be a human being of like feelings with oneself.

“A distinguished theologian has recently complained that friendship is a sensitive plant which has not time to mature in the stress and rush of modern life. In clubs like the Garrick a rest cure may be found for that distracted sentiment, perhaps the only places left where middle age can hope to



keep its friendship in tolerable repair. Literature, from its very nature, must be a solitary profession. To its practitioner after a day's work the free and easy talk and laughter of a congenial circle must always be a grateful relaxation. Of the friendly spirit essential to such a result Jeyes was the very embodiment. No one ever entered into the genial flow of club talk with more contagious good humour. An admirable talker himself, he was something rarer and finer, the cause of good talk in others. Good talkers are scarce enough, but good talkers who will listen are social pearls beyond price, and infinitely rarer.

“No one could listen long to Jeyes's talk without being impressed by his wide knowledge and intellectual outlook; but while, like Addison, he could ‘draw for a thousand pounds,’ unlike that eminent author and politician he had no lack of small change, and could hold his own admirably in the lighter interchanges of the smoking-room, or rather hall, which, after an internecine conflict perceptibly longer than the Boer War, was annexed, despite horrific protests, to the smoking area of the establishment.

“As a conversationalist he did not lend himself so much to quotation, but perhaps would best be described by Dr. Johnson's definition of the most agreeable form of that engaging art:

“‘The happiest conversation is that of which

nothing is distinctly remembered but a general effect of pleasing impression.'

"His friends used sometimes to rally him upon his entire lack of that most famous of all human irritants, the Oxford manner. Indeed, it was not always easy to bear in mind that the kindly humorist, who threw himself so frankly into the fun of the moment, was a distinguished and scholarly Oxonian. One can even recall unscrupulous attempts, always, I am bound to confess, unsuccessful, to draw him into comparative controversy by affecting to believe that his education had been completed on the banks of the Cam. No one was ever less of the Don. Even Oxford did not prevent his enjoying the humour, when a brilliant member complained, at a time when some ill-conditioned people thought that our statesmen were drawn perhaps too exclusively from a certain college in Broad Street, that England was being ruined by 'these sons of Balliol.'

"For several years he served on the Committee of the Garrick, at whose consultations his admirable good sense was always a strengthening force.

"At the Beefsteak Club he was always a welcome diner, and though he only joined it comparatively late in life, he caught at once its homely and intimate note. No one ever had more of that most priceless of all social gifts, what Robert Louis Stevenson calls the gift of intimacy. Most social

qualities are reciprocal. Clubs liked Jeyes perhaps in part because he liked clubs so much himself. No member was ever more popular. In a way they embodied the qualities which specially appealed to him, the toleration, easy give and take, all the amenities which make the camaraderie of club life. There was no club of which he was a member that did not feel perceptibly the poorer by his loss. Always giving of his best, he was fortunate in the possession of the qualities, not too common in themselves, and thrice precious in combination, which go to the making the most agreeable of all types produced by the evolution of the city life, a clubbable man."

After lunch Jeyes would sometimes play a game of billiards ; then perhaps to Shoe Lane for the afternoon, and back to his rooms to dress for a dinner-party. The hours in Fleet Street were more indulgent than they have become in these times when the daily papers are "on the stone" before midnight. In the late 'nineties it was still possible for an editor to dine with some comfort and begin his night's task afterwards. His engagements never interfered with Jeyes's work. He was very regular and punctual in his attendance at the office, and neither social distractions nor his occasional attacks of gout, would keep him away from his desk. Sometimes when he could hardly hobble into a four-wheeler he would get down to Shoe Lane somehow,

and write leaders, and instruct printers and reporters, with an inflamed foot resting on a chair. And the chief sign he gave of suffering was to answer rather testily if anybody asked him how he felt.

He did not take many holidays. Country bred and born, with his roots in the soil, he had become a thorough-going Londoner, and he loved London, as Thackeray loved it or Johnson, and was never, I think, entirely comfortable when far from its throbbing heart and multitudinous voices. When he sought a change it was usually with his friends or kinsfolk in some part of England. In the autumn of 1897 he was the guest of my wife and myself for a week at Puys, near Dieppe. Henry M. Stanley and Gilbert Parker, with their wives, and other friends of ours, were staying in the hotel at Puys at the time, and likewise as it happened the lady whom Jeyes afterwards married. It was a pleasant party, and Jeyes kept us all in good spirits with his unfailing store of epigram, anecdote, and genial satire.

He was married on December 30th, 1901, to Miss Genevieve Sherman, daughter of Charles Edward Sherman, of New York, U.S.A., and step-daughter to Mr. Edwin Bale, R.I., a painter of charming landscapes in water colours, and the art-director of a great publishing firm. Marriage brought much to Jeyes besides content and a deeper happiness, and

the closest and most sympathetic companionship. He had hardly ever been out of England till he was middle-aged ; but he became something of a traveller in his later years. He took his holidays in France, Italy, and Switzerland ; he accompanied his wife on a longish visit to the United States and Canada, in which he got as far as the Pacific Coast ; he spent a month in 1909 in the Canaries ; in 1910 he was in Portugal, went up the Douro valley, and stayed for some weeks at Busaco ; and he was projecting a somewhat protracted journey into the East when his final illness fell upon him.

After his marriage he lived for a couple of years in a flat in Victoria Street. Then he moved to his father-in-law's house in Grove End Road, St. John's Wood. In that pleasant suburb, with its wide, clean roadways, and its groves rustling under the breeze from the northern heights, Jeyes took great delight. From the *fumum et opes strepitumque Romae* he escaped gladly to Mr. Bale's green lawn and gay flower-beds, and the ample studio, where he smoked his pipes and wrote his articles. The Garrick saw him less often ; busy in his office and his home, he had fewer hours to spare for miscellaneous society and amusement.

In the autumn of 1904, while Jeyes was on a holiday with his wife in France, he received a telegram calling him back to London to learn that the *Standard* had been sold, and that a new pro-

prietor had entered into possession. The news fell upon many people in Fleet Street and elsewhere like a thunderbolt; for though the sale to Mr. C. Arthur Pearson had in fact occurred some months earlier, the arrangement had been kept secret, and the editor and the staff went on working, unconscious of the vast change that had been made in their position and prospects. To Jeyes the shock was severe. George Byron Curtis, who had succeeded Mr. Mudford in the editorship, was an amiable, kindly, and conscientious journalist, and his promotion had been well earned by many years of assiduous service. But during his tenure of the office the direction of the paper passed more and more into the hands of Jeyes, and it was the general expectation that he would in due course—perhaps before very long—find himself elevated to the editorship. The succession to the post seemed his by right, and in harmony with office precedent. The *Standard* editorial staff had been a close hierarchy, and promotion came according to established rules. Intervention from outside was deemed unlikely. The paper, until the few years immediately preceding the transfer, had sailed on its prosperous course, serenely indifferent to the doings of its contemporaries and the many currents quivering through the journalistic world. Even so might some great galleon have rolled heavily through the Spanish Main, with its cargo of ingots, and its

company of contemptuous Dons, till the black craft with the raking masts shot alongside out of the blue; and presently the crew were under hatches, with the broad banner of St. Jago trampled on the deck, and the Jolly Roger flapping in its place. It was one of the tragedies of Fleet Street, that street of many tragedies.

The captors of the *Standard* were indulgent, and even generous, in their victory. It was only natural that Mr. Pearson should prefer to send to the quarter-deck a chief officer of his own choosing. Poor Curtis, not illiberally compensated, had to go. But the new proprietary recognised the value of the assistant-editor, and ample offers were made to him. After some hesitation he decided to remain. His decision was due to his sense of loyalty to the *Standard* far more than to any pecuniary considerations. He had helped to direct the vessel in its days of success, and it went against his feelings to desert it when it was steering through somewhat broken waters.

But he knew that with the appointment of a capable and energetic new editor his own chance of the succession had practically disappeared. He had never the slightest doubt of that himself, and the blow was deeply felt. His life, for years past, had been bound up with the great daily. Amid all his other occupations and amusements this was his one abiding interest. He had served faithfully

and well, and he looked forward confidently to his reward, though he seldom gave expression to the hope. When a tempting offer of a colonial editorship, with a very large salary, was made to him he refused it without hesitation. "I suppose I shall be editor of the *Standard* some time or other, you know," he said to me, in one of his rare moments of self-revelation. And to be editor of the *Standard* was what he wanted; it was almost the only thing he did want. With his combination of ambition and reserve it was the position that would have satisfied him better than any other. The honours and the perpetual advertisement of public life would have jarred upon him; nor do I think he would have really cared very much for literary distinction. But to have the consciousness of power, without parading his personality, to remain in the background, and yet in a sense to feel that he was ruling the rulers of mankind, to know that under the veil of anonymity he was exerting a great influence upon great events—all this appealed to him keenly. Moreover, he liked the business of journalism, and would have welcomed the opportunity of independent direction. To see all this prospect swept away at a stroke was bitter indeed. He never, I think, quite recovered from the effects of the reverse.

But he did not complain or lament, and he shrank sensitively from the undignified pose of a disap-



pointed man. He went on with his work for the *Standard*, quietly and steadily as before ; and only a very few who knew him well could perceive that there was some dimming of the old spontaneous *joie de vivre*, some loss of buoyancy and zest. The editor under the Pearson régime, Mr. H. A. Gwynne, was as much indebted to Jeyes as his predecessors had been for invaluable co-operation, competent advice, and pertinacious labour.

It was labour after a time done under increasing stress ; for Jeyes's health was slowly breaking. In his earlier years I gather that he had impressed his contemporaries as a person of exceptional physical vigour. Though he affected to scorn athletics at school he was stronger than most of the athletes. Two of his schoolmates, both tall and lusty youths, once tried to force him into the stocks of a country village near Uppingham, but their united powers could not overcome the victim's resistance. At Trinity his splendid health was the admiration of his friends. He believed in it himself with that kind of *ὑβρις* which the Greeks thought the high gods will surely punish. While we were at the *St. James's* I had to condole with him on the death of a near kinsman *anno aetat.* 74. "A good age to live to," I said. "Do you think so?" answered Jeyes; "I expect to live much longer than that myself." Mr. Freeman tells me that in their college days Jeyes said to him: "If I marry and

have children, I do not suppose I shall leave them much, except, I hope, my own iron constitution."

So do we make a jest of Fate ! There must have been some alloy in the iron ; for in later years Jeyes suffered not infrequently from gout and other ailments, though he made, and kept, a sturdy resolution that they should not impede his work. I do not know when exactly the first symptoms appeared of the painful malady which cut short his life. To his physicians the case appeared grave from the outset. Jeyes, however, presented an unruffled front to the world, nor would he suffer himself to relax his journalistic and literary activities. He even undertook new tasks and obligations. Among these was the volume entitled *The Russells of Birmingham*, prepared and completed some years before his death, though it was not published till the autumn of 1911.

This book was founded upon a collection of papers, dealing with the affairs of a Midland family in the closing period of the eighteenth, and the early years of the nineteenth, century. Jeyes handled the materials entrusted to him with much skill, and wove them into an extremely interesting and illuminative narrative. William Russell of Birmingham was a close friend of Dr. Priestley, and he shared in the popular animosity aroused by the opinions of that radical, humanitarian, and heterodox divine. He

was so "French" in his sympathies, and so ardent an admirer of the Revolution, that he had his house burnt by a patriotic Church-and-King mob in the famous Birmingham Riots of 1791. England becoming impossible for him he migrated to the United States with his family, was captured on the voyage by a French man-of-war, and met with various adventures in the Old World and the New. "Against their will," says Jeyes, "almost without their knowledge, these prosperous, cultivated, inconspicuous persons were thrust from the humdrum routine of a sheltered life, and caught in the vortex of international strife. Their journals and correspondence, casually composed and accidentally preserved, show us how the vicissitudes of war and peace affected a class of English people who have been given little space in the printed records of a momentous age." The book sheds useful sidelights on some aspects of this crowded time. It also exhibits Jeyes's literary craftsmanship at his best. His instinct for character and motive finds ample scope in his treatment of this little group of highly respectable middle-class Britons; and there is a flow of quiet humour running through these pages which suggests that the author, if he had found leisure and opportunity, might have become a successful practitioner of fiction in the school of Jane Austen, always one of his favourite novelists. The style, too, is reminiscent of that admirable

model in its lucidity, its precision, its lightness of touch, and its absolute freedom from meretriciousness and straining after effect, which to Jeyes were the least pardonable of literary misdemeanours.

Another commission he accepted was that of writing a biography of the late Sir Howard Vincent, an uncongenial and uncomfortable task, which had to be left unfinished, though Jeyes laboured strenuously—too strenuously—to the very last to get it completed.

All through those two closing years his health was failing fast, and a serious operation became necessary. But he kept his flag flying with heroic constancy. He fought the disease boldly and even cheerfully, and few, save those who attended him with unsparing devotion, were allowed to know that he was seriously ill. Whether he ever admitted it, even to himself, I do not know; at any rate, until the end he sternly declined to claim indulgence on the ground of ill-health. He clung to his duties at the *Standard* with grim tenacity, and impatiently refused to hand over his work or his responsibilities to others. After the early spring of 1911 he was no longer able to get down to the office. But he insisted that proofs and correspondence and reviews of books should still be sent up to his house. He read the letters and articles, and dictated answers and notes with his wife's help; and on the afternoon before he died he was endeavouring to

give his attention to a budget of papers brought up to him by a clerk from Shoe Lane.

In those closing months of pain and weakness he could receive no visitors except two or three very old and intimate friends. I saw him for the last time a few days before his death. It was in that thronged and feverish week of King George's coronation, when all London was tossing restlessly under its trappings. But the decorations and the tumult left the quarter of groves and gardens untouched. Peace and sunshine were on the green lawn where Jeyes was lying in a little tent, such sunshine and such peace as made the coming of death more poignant in its pathos. For I knew then that he was a dying man, and so, I think, did those about him. But shattered and feeble as he was there was still in him the old dauntless spirit, a flash even of the old gaiety. With the sad convention we use on such occasions one had to affect ignorance of his real condition. We talked thinly of trivialities and externals, of the time when the patient would be able to get a "change", of politics, of the newspapers, of the coronation, and of its hollow pomps and mocking pageantries as they seemed to me at that moment. Helpless on his couch, speaking slowly and with much effort, Jeyes still gave no sign of yielding. He had the ghost of a satiric jest for a person whose name was mentioned. And of himself and his malady he would

not say much ; but he was still hopeful. He believed that he had taken a turn for the better and was now steadily mending. I wondered if he really thought so, or if this was only another example of the valiant hypocrisy that will not accept the truth if the truth means defeat. And I wondered too, as I passed out through the trim garden, sparkling under the midsummer sky, if he and I should meet again in this world. In truth I saw him no more. I called at Grove End Road a day or two later ; but he was too ill to see anybody ; and early in the morning of June 26th, 1911, he passed away.

There were kindly notices of him by his colleagues in the *Times* and *Standard* and the other leading London journals, and sorrowing hearts in that large circle of those who knew and loved him. To the general body of newspaper readers the announcement of his death, no doubt, meant little ; for they had not appreciated his personality or estimated his attainments at their true value. To some degree that, I suppose, must be the lot of all men who work for the Press under the veil of anonymity. But most journalists of ability and ambition find frequent occasion to break through the screen which hides them from the public view. With Jeyes it was otherwise. He made few attempts to draw aside the curtain behind which he moved, and he would have found the glare of the footlights extremely

disturbing to his eyes. There is hardly a "signed article" amid all the myriad columns he contributed to the Press, though these, if they could be collected, would make many more volumes than the books of which he was the avowed author. His biographical and critical works, well-written and creditable as they are, do not represent the main portion of his activity, nor do they give the true measure of his capacity. This was not solely because he was absorbed in the daily task, nor was it that he lacked the initiative to undertake some enterprise of larger scope and more permanent value. But the precise form never, I think, presented itself; he was of the company of those who do not find the instrument to express themselves completely, and so "die with all their music in them," or at least with much of it mute save to a few attentive ears.

At any rate his chief energies were engaged, as the reader of these pages will have seen, for nearly a quarter of a century in comment on public affairs, on literature, and on life, all thrown into the fragmentary form which journalism exacts from those who feed the devouring fires of its altars. Most of this matter must be left to drift upon the shoreless sea of the newspaper files, or to sink into their unplumbed depths. But it has seemed worth while to cast the line here and there into the "ocean of dead dogs," and to bring to the surface a few specimens from the writings which streamed from

that competent pen, before the busy fingers that held it were caught too soon and stilled for ever. It may be that the excerpts given in the following pages are not in all cases the best examples of their author's work. He was, in his characteristic modesty, careless of his own reputation ; he attached small value to his fugitive writings, and kept no record of them ; and to recover them from the tumult of printed matter wherein they lie entombed has been no easy task. These fragments of journey-work, done to meet the passing needs of the hour, are often no more than an index to the potentialities which lay hidden in that capacious brain, in that large and kindly heart. But they seem worth preserving, as some memorial of a man who impressed all who knew him by the force and keenness of his intellect, by the sanity and sincerity of his temper, by his wit and humour, his charity, his chivalry, his inexhaustible good-nature, and his wise and genial outlook upon the drama of life in which he played, for too brief a term, his self-effacing and honourable part.

S. L.



PART II

RULERS OF ENGLAND  
AND OTHER PAPERS

By S. H. JEYES

## NOTE

*The series of letters by Friar John addressed to Rulers of England appeared in the Standard between May 27 and August 19, 1907. The original Friar John was a companion of Pantagruel.*





SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN

## SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN

SIR,

At the age of seventy you became a new man. It is acknowledged that last session you disappointed your enemies and surprised many of your friends by not coming to grief as Leader of the House of Commons. When Mr. Balfour resigned and you took office at the end of 1905, it was remembered that for six years you had conducted the Opposition without either organising a single resolute attack on the Unionist Government or once stimulating the enterprise of the younger Liberals. Reputed indolent in spirit, infirm of purpose, not over-ready in speech, you were contemptuously ignored as little better than a parliamentary automaton, a sort of animated Newcastle programme. In the inner circles of your party it was stated that in the course of a few months you would withdraw to the serener atmosphere of the House of Lords, and leave the business of the popular assembly to be managed by statesmen younger, more adroit, and better fitted to control its turbulence. Within a few weeks you had entirely reversed the general estimate of your powers, and, though for a time

your attendance was rendered irregular by the claims of a private sorrow, your occasional interventions in debate were marked by a rude and unexpected vigour. The applause which you earned by these efforts has been your undoing, since you appear to have developed a somewhat overbearing temper. On certain occasions it is true that Mr. Gladstone permitted himself to bully the Opposition, but as a rule he treated it with almost deferential courtesy, and reserved his severities for impatient or refractory members of his own party. You, on the contrary, are obsequious to the Radicals and Socialists, strain the allegiance of Moderate Liberals and exasperate the Conservatives. "Enough of this foolery," you exclaimed when Mr. Balfour plagued you with his dialectic. You were rewarded with a storm of cheering from the new members. But you had struck a false note, and already the men who then admired your petulant outburst are imbibing the traditions and learning the etiquette of Westminster. In the present session your influence has visibly declined. The Radicals are beginning to see that you are an incompetent Leader of the House. You frame ambitious programmes, but get little or nothing done.

Popular you have always been, and in your Scottish constituency, which you have represented since 1868, you are impregnable. You have made no enemies through personal intrigue. No man

can hold his tongue so persistently, or sit more tightly to the saddle. But amiability, honesty, and doggedness are not qualities which by themselves adapt a man to the most powerful position in the greatest Empire in the world, or even help him to guide the destinies of a party in the House of Commons. For it would be idle to pretend that your intellect is above the average level of the ordinary front-bench man. Your eloquence falls short of that modest standard. Even when you have written out what you conceive to be a choice passage you do not deliver it effectively. Can it be suggested that you have shown yourself a skilful and earnest administrator? Behind you lies a long record of official experience. But as an understrapper, first at the War Office and afterwards at the Admiralty, you betrayed no sign of unsettling energy. This absence of inconvenient zeal marked you out for promotion, and in 1884 you were made Chief Secretary. With characteristic pluck and self-confidence you undertook the task of governing Ireland, torn as it was with sedition and almost on the point of rebellion. It was not likely that the Parnellites would give an easy time to Mr. George Trevelyan's successor, but on your imperturbable good humour they made no sensible impression. You were a "Scotch Sandbag," they declared, and you met their random and frantic punchings with an insuperable passive resistance. By the aid of coercion you maintained

a semblance of Law and Order. This, probably, was the most distinguished epoch in your administrative career.

In your own opinion, however, the summit was reached on the glorious day when you announced in the House of Commons that the Duke of Cambridge had been induced to resign the post of Commander-in-Chief. For this purpose you had steadily worked ever since you became Minister of War in 1892. The cousin of Queen Victoria was not easily displaced, and we know that only by the firm, though affectionate, representations of Her Majesty was he persuaded to retire. At the time, however, the sole credit for what was regarded as the first step towards military reorganisation was given to the Secretary of State, who declared that, without further delay, the Government would carry out the reforms recommended by the Hartington Commission. June 21, 1895, was to be a red-letter day for the British Army, the War Office, and Mr. Campbell-Bannerman. Before night the Ministry had been defeated. It was shown in the House of Commons that the store of ammunition had been dangerously depleted, and on the Cordite Vote the salary of the jubilating Minister for War was reduced by £100. It was only by a majority of seven that Mr. Brodrick's amendment had been carried, and the Government were entitled, if they had wished, to reinstate the



Vote and invite the House to reconsider its decision. You stood on your dignity, and insisted, if Lord Rosebery should go on, that you would retire. You had stated in the House of Commons that the supply of cordite was sufficient. You had not been believed. You would listen to no terms and entertain no compromise. This, of course, was tantamount to wrecking the whole Administration, since your departure would involve a shifting of offices, and a Cabinet with an effective majority of about twenty could not venture upon reconstruction.

Already, however, you were known to be at cross purposes with your titular Chief, and siding with the Radical faction, the old Gladstonian guard, against the Liberal Imperialists. There never had been sympathy between you and Lord Rosebery. Personally he scarcely troubled to conceal his opinion of your understanding and narrow principles, while, as a practical politician, you detected and despised his moral vacillation and theatrical posturing. Not a vindictive man, you did not pursue him after he had thrown up the party leadership. Placidly you left him alone until he showed sign of again popping up and gathering around him a band of Liberal Imperialists who intended to relegate you to a secondary position. The South African War gave you an opportunity. With perverse courage you stuck to your Little England creed, and disgraced yourself by defaming the men

who were fighting the battles of their country. The slanders of malignant foreigners did not bite so cruelly as your declaration that our officers and soldiers were practising "methods of barbarism." You stained an honourable life with an indelible stigma. The indignation caused by a series of similar, though less offensive utterances had given heart to the Liberal Imperialists, none of whom was more self-assertive than your present Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was decided to give him a dinner in honour of his independence. You called a party meeting, and though Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey claimed the right to speak freely what they thought, you damped down the whole project, and the subsequent banquet was a tame and colourless ceremony.

Naturally, you were determined to serve neither under nor with Lord Rosebery. With extraordinary shrewdness you chose a killing lure and landed your fish. When the last General Election was well in sight he had, professedly as a private individual, started on a political tour in the West of England, and was being everywhere received—under decorous protest—as the Liberal leader. All his other principles he left nebulous, but against Home Rule he made a definite declaration. Hence your famous manifesto to the Nationalists, advising them to accept such a measure of Devolution as would be consistent with and lead

up to the larger policy of Home Rule. The impetuous nobleman did not give himself time to think. Promptly he repudiated you and your programme. Of course, you took him at his word. This was sagacious. But it was still more subtle of you to steal away his sworn supporters. Either they were offered or they had solicited explanations which satisfied their scruples. He received no similar assurance. Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Haldane, and Sir Henry Fowler trooped over to the banner under which Lord Rosebery would never fight. He was left outside lamenting, while you were the man in possession. It is known that within the Cabinet the Liberal Imperialists have made occasional displays of independence, as, for instance, last year over the Trade Disputes Bill. But for this act of mutiny you made them atone by a public recantation.

In the enjoyment of power you have lost your old tact in manipulating men. Just as in the Education Bill you infuriated Churchmen and Roman Catholics without bringing contentment to political Nonconformists, so in the Irish Council Bill you have irritated Unionists without gaining the support of Home Rulers. You thought, no doubt, that you had squared Dr. Clifford and Mr. Perks, as you believed yourself assured of Mr. Redmond's allegiance. But when the pinch came you were in both cases deserted by the friends for

whose sake you had aroused permanent and unrelenting enmities. Similarly your handling of the Imperial Conference has been singularly unfortunate. Our visitors from the Colonies were gratified with your personal cordiality, but you permitted colleagues and subordinates to hold language which sent the Premiers away all disappointed, and some of them affronted. In the same way, your philanderings with schemes for gradual disarmament at The Hague Conference have revived German suspicions of British policy, caused disquietude in France, misgivings in Japan, and polite ridicule in Italy. Briefly, you exasperated our rivals and annoyed our allies. From sheer insular incapacity to enter into the foreigners' point of view, you, who pride yourself on your cosmopolitan sympathies, have imperilled what you believed yourself to be promoting—the cause of peace and retrenchment. As for Reform, the third article in the traditional programme of the Liberal party, you have set it back by identifying progress with a double attack on the principles of Private Property and the historic duties of the Upper House of Parliament. The development of your plan of campaign against those institutions is awaited by their defenders with curiosity rather than concern. A kindly, simple gentleman, essentially of the middle class, possessed of a great fortune and moderate capacities, you have, perhaps, been fed up by the

flatteries of interested sycophants. But you have not in you the makings of a Catiline or a Cade. Your humble and blameless function is to act as a stopgap while the Liberal party is looking for its principles.

At times you seem to rejoice, with all Mr. Roosevelt's unsophisticated fervour, in "clanking platitudes." "La Douma est morte, vive la Douma" was one of them. "A way must be found" (for suppressing the House of Lords), "and a way shall be found" was another. It is astonishing that so shrewd and practical a man, gifted also with a sense of humour, should impose on himself with phrases culled from a select dialogue between Mr. Obvious and Mr. Bounceable. It might have been better for your reputation if you had been chosen to succeed Speaker Peel in the Chair of the House of Commons. This was the limit of your parliamentary aspirations, and you would have occupied that exalted position with dignity and firmness. But as Prime Minister of England you are a misfit and a makeshift, and when you fall into political tantrums you are about as formidable as a blind man who has lost his dog.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

FRIAR JOHN.

The Right Hon.

SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, G.C.B.

## MR. H. H. ASQUITH

SIR,

It is the general opinion in Parliament that you are on your trial. If the Radicals can ruin your career it will be idle to look for mercy. When you were at Balliol under Jowett you and Alfred Milner were marked out by the Master (an acknowledged expert in rising talent), and by the yet shrewder estimate of your undergraduate contemporaries, as destined for the highest places in the service of the State. This flattering opinion was in neither case earned simply by the ease with which you both swept up honours and prizes at Oxford. Other scholars, more accomplished than either, may be recalled for whom nobody predicted public eminence. Nor was the confidence in your fortunes inspired by your performances at the Union. Persuasive, polished, and occasionally spirited, not even in the more fervid days of youth did you stir the hearts of an audience. Indeed, you never were young until you had reached the confines of middle age, when suddenly you blossomed into a blameless frivolity. But as a Scholar and Fellow of Balliol you had already displayed a strength of character



MR. ASQUITH





and an almost intuitive knowledge of the world, an incorruptible rectitude, and a temper as genial as can be afforded by a man who has to make his own way in life. These inestimable qualities you combined with a sturdy physique and the power of doing hard work without intellectual fatigue.

Like most barristers who mean to succeed in their profession, you married early, and your first wife made you the father of a lad not unlikely to follow in your steps. For some time you contributed solid articles to a high-class weekly paper, but while you kept one eye on politics you toiled steadily at your law. It is not probable that you would ever have made a famous name at the Bar. You "got on," it is true, and got on rapidly. But your mind had neither the acuteness nor the narrowness required by the brief-getting and verdict-winning lawyer. The principal feat in your professional career was your masterly cross-examination of the *Times* manager before the Parnell Commission. Had you been tempted to adhere to the law you would, no doubt, have earned a very considerable income, and by this time have received high judicial appointments. But you would not have won a place among the great advocates or judges whose names have become household words. It was, therefore, no vast sacrifice which you made in 1892 when you accepted Mr. Gladstone's offer and became Home Secretary in his last Administration.

From your conduct in that difficult and somewhat discredited Office you received unqualified commendation. There was no Cass case, no Beck case, no Edalji case, while you were responsible for the London police and the prerogative of mercy. You put a stop to the Sunday riots in Trafalgar Square by the bold and simple expedient of permitting the agitators to hold their meetings there if only they would give due notice to the Commissioner of Police. You even went so far as to "protect" the demagogues by arranging that a sufficient force of constables should be in attendance. No sooner was the demand of the Social Democrats conceded by authority than they ceased to value the civic privilege. Neither amusement nor booty was to be gained by blocking the streets of Central London peaceably and in a lawful manner. The foaming orators of republican clubs feared they might look flat and foolish if they ranted under official tutelage, nor did the sons of the proletariat who hoped to raid the shops of West End jewellers relish the idea of being inspected at close quarters by emissaries of Scotland Yard. But there was other trouble for the Home Office during your term of office. It was a period of bad strikes, yet you were cool and imperturbable in maintaining order. For this fidelity to duty a black mark was made against your name in quarters which at that time did not matter. The official Liberals then had no dealings with the

Labour men, and your firmness as administrator was reckoned the party asset. In the short-lived Government of which Mr. Gladstone and Lord Rosebery were successive chiefs, you were the one man who had strengthened his hold on public regard, unless we are to think that Sir William Harcourt increased his fame by his "great Democratic Budget"—an achievement which you have been called upon to emulate thirteen years later. In 1895, Lord Rosebery's authority had been badly shaken, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's star had not yet risen. Sir William Harcourt was already a failing force, and Mr. John Morley had shown himself devoid of the qualities that go to popular leadership. It was generally felt that you were the man of the future, and though the managers of the Liberal party doubted whether they could "go to the country on Asquith," you stood far ahead of all other available candidates for the first place in the House of Commons. Unfortunately, you never cultivated the arts of popularity in that captious assembly, and in 1899 the Radicals contrived to thrust you aside in favour of the genial gentleman who now presides over the Councils of the Cabinet.

Throughout the South African War you had the temerity to espouse the cause of Great Britain. As is your habit you spoke out plainly, though you knew that every word uttered on behalf of your

country would be taken as an attack upon Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. In 1901 the quarrel came to a head. You repudiated the language used by eminent pro-Boers. You declined to be branded with the heretics and schismatics because you held patriotic views on Imperial questions, and you maintained that your Liberalism was not less sincere because, with regard to the struggle then in progress, you differed from the official leader of the party. This, of course, was taken as a declaration of independence, and the Liberal Imperialists announced that they would celebrate the occasion by entertaining the author at a public banquet. The crisis was thought so alarming that a general meeting of the party was convened at the Reform Club. There, with Sir Edward Grey, you insisted on your right to speak your mind without "ambiguous formulas," but the official pressure was so scientifically applied that fewer than forty of the Liberal Imperialist Members ventured to show themselves at your dinner. Perhaps you had some reason to complain of Lord Rosebery, for though he talked valiantly and volubly, he declined to come forward and reclaim a party which had been led astray.

Nevertheless, when it became evident in 1905 that the Liberals would be placed in power at the coming General Election, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman decided in his mind that Lord Rosebery should be shed, and you must be won back. After

he had made his startling bid for the Nationalist vote he privately offered you explanations which rendered it possible for you to accept Office without going back upon your recantation of Home Rule. Rightly or wrongly, you are credited with having led the Imperial return to the banner under which Lord Rosebery would not serve. You so far made good your pledges as to Ireland that the Bill offered to Mr. Redmond was one which the Nationalists outside Parliament would not permit him to accept. But what other proof of moral fortitude have you given since you took office under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman? As Chancellor of the Exchequer you have been inclined to look indulgently upon plans for reducing the Naval and Military Estimates. Over the Trade Disputes Bill last year you played a sorry part, since you disavowed in public the limitations on which you had previously insisted, though it must be added that other statesmen, in both parties, joined in the stampede before the Labour vote. Confronted, soon afterwards, with the demand for universal old age pensions, you asserted that nothing lay closer to your heart than the hope of making this provision for the poor. If that was a true confession your past life had been one long dissimulation. Never had the most intimate of your friends suspected this cherished flame. This year you have given earnest of your faith by promising to start the

scheme in your next Budget. What have you gained by temporising with Socialism? Not long ago Mr. Keir Hardie made a bitter attack on you and Mr. Haldane and Lord Rosebery. He bracketed you together as defenders of that "crime against humanity," the South African War. Two of that company, he said, were members of the inner tabernacle of the Liberal party; while the other, the "best of the three," was wandering in the wilderness. At present, happily, Mr. Keir Hardie is not the king-maker, but his words fairly represent the opinion of many Radicals in the House of Commons. While you were doing their work in Opposition and making the best speeches on your side against Tariff Reform they were ready enough to profit by your labours. If you have aroused bitter enmities, you have also made many good friends, and they hope that the Radical coercionists may threaten you with open hostility. That would settle the question, for you are a stubborn man and would not yield to menace. When the Land Tenure Bill last year was in Committee they tried to get up a revolt against Ministerial concessions to the Opposition. You stamped it out with a heavy foot.

The sincerity of your devotion to Free Trade principles cannot be called into question. Yet it has fallen to your lot to undermine the existing fiscal system and unwillingly to promote both

branches of Mr. Chamberlain's policy. Your cautiously elaborated Budget this year showed that we have pretty well reached the limit of direct taxation, and that, if further calls are to be made on the national resources, we must have recourse to duties on imported commodities. Similarly, the lecture on political economy which you delivered at the Imperial Conference was so unhappily phrased that it brought about a reaction in favour of the movement which you meant to destroy. In denouncing Preference you intended no personal discourtesy towards the Colonial Premiers. It was academical arrogance, not egotism or conceit, which induced you to treat our visitors as undergraduates assembled for a lesson in a subject which they had not studied. Without meaning it, you gave offence to our visitors and helped to produce a general impression that they were being disrespectfully treated by the representatives of the nation. Here, indeed, is revealed the failing which may spoil your fortunes. You cannot disagree gracefully. Probably you are not more resolutely opposed than several of your colleagues to the demands of the Women's Suffrage agitators. Yet they have marked you down for special animosity, and even at the doors of your private house you have been singled out for their shrewish assaults. They misunderstand you altogether if they think that you can be bullied into submission. It is to coaxing that you

respond. In regard to Devolution for Ireland, for instance, though you did not go far enough to please the Nationalists, you were led much further than you had intended, while your assent to old age pensions on a large scale was the result of clever manipulation. How much happier you would be if you were exposing the whole scheme as inconsistent with the first principles of public finance ! Yet you have given way because you attach an importance, possibly exaggerated, to preventing the Liberal party from being dominated by the extreme men. Therefore, so long as Henry Campbell-Bannerman is a force in politics, you feel yourself bound to keep in touch with him, and he responds by humouring your susceptibilities. But it is a game at which he is the more adroit player.

In the nature of things, however, the day cannot be far distant when a vacancy will occur in the leadership of the Liberal party in the House of Commons. With you lies the *jus successionis*, nor can any of your possible rivals pretend to compete with you in point of past services or Parliamentary gifts. You, alone, on the Government side can hit the right nail on the head and drive it home. Occasionally you can throw off an impromptu joke, such as will pass for wit in the House of Commons. Clearly you have the best title to the place of honour. Once before the prize eluded your grasp.



t would be hard for you to throw away a second chance, for you are an ambitious man, not unconscious of your merits. Still, you are capable of self-renunciation, either if your conscience be stirred or your temper irritated.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

FRIAR JOHN.

To the Right Hon. H. H. ASQUITH.

## THE MARQUESS OF RIPON

MY LORD,

You boasted the other day that you had been a staunch Radical since you entered the House of Commons in 1852 as member for Hull. There is, in truth, no spot or blemish in your party record. With the ups and downs of Liberalism you have been alternately elevated and submerged, never deserting the ship or seeking refuge in a cave. Quite naturally, your political record has been one of uninterrupted promotion. It is, perhaps, going too far to suggest that you have always been a Radical, since you served contentedly under Palmerston and Russell, and held an important office in Gladstone's first Administration—so vehemently assailed by the Nonconformist Radicals. Yet we have your word for it that you were always in sympathy with the forward group, and it is certain that you have at least progressed with the times and adapted your faith to each successive programme.

On your own side there is no statesman who has gone through so long and varied a training in the duties of State, yet you have not earned a reputation for administrative skill. As a matter of fact you do not deserve all the blame heaped upon you



THE MARQUESS OF RIPON



by your critics, since the failures or indiscretions with which your name is associated were brought about by the policy of your chiefs and colleagues. When left to yourself and allowed to act upon your own judgment, you did something to modify their errors. For you are a most excellent man of business, and in the Cabinet yours has generally been reckoned a good opinion. Your official experience began in 1859, as Under Secretary, first for War and then for India. In 1863 you were made Minister of War, and in 1866 Secretary of State for India. From that time forward you have been reckoned an indispensable member of every Liberal Administration. Mr. Gladstone, in 1868, made you Lord President of the Council, and from the light duties of that almost honorary post you were spared to promote International Arbitration, by acting as Chairman of the Alabama Commission, which resulted in the ambiguous and troublesome instrument known as the Treaty of Washington. Your tact and kindliness earned golden opinions, and it was agreed that you displayed an almost unexpected aptitude for giving away the British case.

By these public services you endeared yourself to Mr. Gladstone, who appointed you, in 1880, to be Governor-General of India, where, as will be seen below, you faithfully carried on the Imperial traditions of the Liberal party. An intimate friend of Mr. Morley, and an early advocate of

Home Rule for Ireland, you were enlisted, for a few troubled months in 1886, as First Lord of the Admiralty. When, in 1892, the Liberals were again placed in office with a so-called mandate for the new Irish policy you were appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies, nor, on Mr. Gladstone's retirement two years later, did your Radicalism prevent you from serving under Lord Rosebery. It was but a fitting reward of lifelong labours that after the last General Election you should be given the distinguished sinecure of Lord Privy Seal and retain the titular leadership of the Upper House.

For the heavy work of piloting complicated Bills through a hostile Chamber you were manifestly disqualified by advanced age and health not too robust, but it would be a mistake to treat you as an extinct volcano. There was fire, as well as smoke, in the speech last week with which you wound up the reply of the Government to Lord Londonderry's indictment of their Irish administration. Though you maintained the official view that the reports of agrarian outrage in the south and west were greatly exaggerated, you excited some surprise by giving a fairly plain hint that a continuance of serious disorder might be followed by resort to vigorous measures of repression. The word coercion was not whispered, lest your Radical friends should suffer perturbation of spirit, but it was rendered evident that the League which has repudiated the

last message of peace from English Liberalism must not presume much longer on the forbearance of the authorities.

It was your misfortune to make history in India, being sent out to reverse Lord Lytton's policy and undo the results of the Afghan War. Just by way of beginning, you disagreed with General Gordon, or it might be more proper to say that he disagreed with you. He had accompanied you as private secretary, and took the view—which, of course, he would not abandon—that the ex-Amir Yakub Khan had been unfairly treated by the Indian Government. Lord Lytton had advised the recognition of Abdur Rahman as Amir of Kabul, while Kandahar, then in British possession, was to be placed under another rule, whose authority we should support by a military force stationed in convenient proximity. But since the occupation of Kandahar, which rendered India unassailable from Central Asia, had figured as one of the main counts in the general indictment of Conservative bloodguiltiness, the new Ministry decided that Afghanistan must be reunited and placed under a strong man. Him they found in Abdur Rahman, and his good faith, which at that time was wavering, you sought to confirm by promises of British support. This general undertaking you repeated in 1883, and put into the practical form of a yearly subsidy of twelve lakhs, to be spent on military defences. From the strategi-

cal point of view the plan has worked out better than was expected, since Abdur Rahman, after some hesitation, decided that on the whole his interest lay on the side of Great Britain. But the arrangement did not promote, what the Gladstone Ministry specially desired, a good understanding with Russia, who resented our predominant influence at Kabul not less than the occupation of Kandahar. Incidentally, if enthusiastic Liberals had cared to inquire, they would have discovered that the cause of humanity and enlightenment in the earth's dark places was not served by consolidating the authority of the very capable but absolutely unscrupulous Prince in whom we were asked to place our trust. The very statesman who has denounced the Sultan to High Heaven for his cruel persecution of rebellious subjects deliberately established upon our own borders a despot far more ruthless than Abdul Hamid. The story of his dealings with his enemies is not fit for ears polite, yet our alliance with his government was trumpeted forth as a triumph of humanitarian statecraft.

Within the borders of India your administration was not unredeemed by sound and useful work. Education was stimulated, and the railway system was considerably developed. But it was hardly to be expected that a Cabinet of Visionaries would be content with merely advancing the moral and material progress of the people. The natives must



be inducted into the privileges of local self-government. The already existing system of municipal and district councils, largely elective, was rendered universal, and their powers were increased. The experiment has fallen flat, being productive neither of the benefits anticipated by the reformers, nor the mischief predicted by old-fashioned officials. More positive in its results, and entirely harmful, was the repeal of the Vernacular Press Act and the removal of efficient restraint upon seditious utterances. But the indignation caused by these well-meant schemes of popular enfranchisement was almost forgotten in the excitement aroused throughout India by the so-called Ilbert Bill—though neither you nor Sir Courtenay Ilbert had drafted that unfortunate measure—which rendered European British subjects liable to trial before a native judge, not only in presidency towns (where they were always subject to such jurisdiction), but also in up-country stations. So bitter was the opposition that stories were circulated, and widely believed, that a plot had been formed for seizing your person and deporting you from Indian territory. There was, of course, no foundation for the legend, but it illustrated the discontent which you had stirred up in the English community. At first, perhaps, it may have seemed sufficient compensation that you gained remarkable popularity amongst the educated and discontented natives of India,

and even at the present time your name is held in honour amongst them. Nevertheless, it was with a sense of general relief that Ministers—discredited by the retrocession of the Transvaal and the tragic muddle in Sudan—learned that you had resigned office.

Nothing, however, that you had done as Governor-General was held to disqualify you for further Imperial administration. Conservatives mindful of the reproaches which they had heaped on Mr. Gladstone for his pusillanimous treatment of the Transvaal, and themselves tardily awakened to the calls of Empire, shook their heads over your appointment in 1892 as Secretary of State for the Colonies. It is, however, matter of common knowledge that you acted with considerable persistence, and once or twice with vigour, in pressing upon Mr. Krüger the demands of the Outlander party for justice and reform. You gave way, it is true, over Swaziland, but incurred the enmity of the Doppers by nullifying the whole value of that obsequious surrender. The Boers were rejoicing over having at last secured their long-desired outlet to the sea when, without a word, you suddenly annexed Sambaaland and Umbigesaland. England, wrote the disgusted Mr. Krüger, had “no more claim on them than on the moon,” and they had been marked down at Pretoria for leisurely deglutition. “It goes without saying,” the old President continued, “that the Transvaal protested against the annexa-

tion, but England did not trouble herself about that." This clever and quite legitimate transaction, which you must either have initiated or sanctioned, was made the text for many general declamations against British perfidy, in which the Liberal party and yourself were expressly included.

In this affair you displayed the stubbornness which serves a man in good stead if he happens to have made up his mind on the right side, but prevents him, when he has fallen into error, from retracing his steps. It is this quality which, perhaps, explains your position as a Roman Catholic in an Anti-Clerical Cabinet. Nothing could be more indecent than to drag a statesman's religious belief into political controversy, though the admission in 1874 of the Grand Master of the English Freemasons, at one time known as a Christian Socialist and Broad Churchman, into the Roman communion was matter of universal comment. From that time you had been known for your personal devotion and noble benefactions to the Church of your adoption. How comes it that you are allied with Nonconformists and Secularists in destroying the elementary schools in which the doctrines of your faith are taught in the only manner sanctioned by its Bishops and clergy? The answer is that you did not believe that Mr. Birrell's scheme would have this effect. You were largely responsible, it is said, for the "four-fifths" clause, believing that the

Roman Catholic schools would thus escape the doom intended for the Church of England institutions. So clearly mistaken was your calculation, so roundly was it repudiated by the Duke of Norfolk and the Catholic Education Committee, that two explanations were put forward of your remaining with the Government. The favourite theory was that you stayed on in the hope of extorting further concessions from the Government—a view confirmed by the success of Ministers in conciliating the Roman Catholics from Ireland. The other suggestion is simply that you were obstinate. Having made up your mind that the Roman Church would not be materially injured you refused to alter your opinion. How will you act next year when the stronger Bill threatened by the Government is laid before Parliament? That, we have been told, is to prevent religious bodies from paying for special instruction in schools maintained by the State. At present you are wedded, in a sort of spiritual bigamy, both to the Radical party and the Roman Church. If you wish to avoid making a painful choice you had better imitate Sir Alexander Swettenham and ask for leave to retire on the ground of a sudden access of old age.

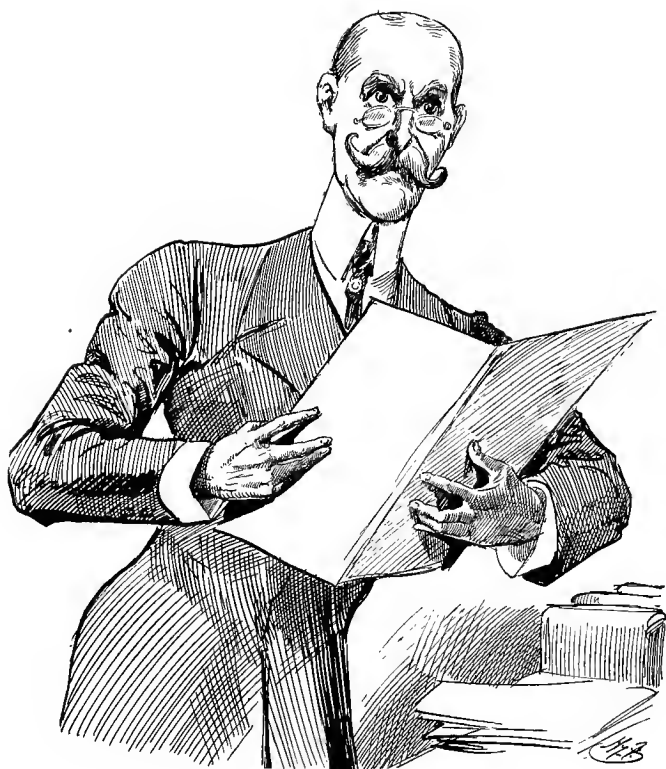
I am, my Lord,

Your obedient servant,

FRIAR JOHN.

The MARQUESS OF RIPON, K.G.





THE EARL OF CREWE

## THE EARL OF CREWE

MY LORD,

All men speak well of you—or nearly all. Yet you are not a Lord whom the Radicals love. The announcement that Lord Rosebery's son-in-law had been made Lord President led to angry mutterings amongst the advanced people in your party. On the first opportunity in the House of Commons some of the Labour members lodged their protest against the appointment. Though the duties of your office are almost honorary, it was hinted that they were beyond your powers and the modest salary was more than you would ever earn. It is easy to imagine the patrician contempt with which you regard their low-bred vapourings. Neither directly nor indirectly would you deign a reply, but you are not one of those pachydermatous aspirants who forgive or forget an attack on their personal dignity. The fortunes of Parliament gave you an easy triumph over your detractors. By the manner in which you conducted the Education Bill last year through the House of Lords, and all but rescued it from impending doom, you won golden opinions. The superior and somewhat condescending air was

thrown off, and the practical man of business was revealed. Without the grace or readiness of an expert debater, you supplied the deficiency by your mastery over all the details of an intricate scheme ; and your exposition, if sometimes halting, was always lucid. Not once did your temper fail, though at times it must have been sorely tried in Committee, when you had to face, day after day, a hostile majority, and deal at the same moment with half a dozen different inquiries—some sensible, some foolish, and others subtle. Yet you were never taken off your guard. Even when a rather shabby trick which your colleagues may have hoped would escape notice under a cloud of technical phraseology was suddenly exposed, you carried off the misadventure with bland and politic indifference. No matter how illusory might be the offer which you were instructed to put forward as a concession, you preserved the serene effrontery of the finished statesman. During the negotiations which ensued on the difference between the two Houses you had little chance of proving your diplomatic skill. Had the arrangement been left on the Liberal side to you and Mr. Birrell you would, undoubtedly, have induced the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Marquess of Lansdowne to accept a compromise which the Church of England would hereafter have found cause to regret. But your *finesse* was thrown away, since no sooner had you worked out a plaus-



ible arrangement than it was repudiated by the group of rabid Nonconformists who had got the ear of the Cabinet. It was, therefore, your bad fortune to be personally associated with the most conspicuous failure of the first session of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Administration.

Nevertheless, you made yourself a very considerable reputation, and, unless the Prime Minister is tempted hereafter to recommend himself for the honour of a peerage, will remain the acting Liberal Leader in the House of Lords. One of the tasks in which you excel is explaining away the incorrect and unmannerly utterances of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. The general acknowledgment of your unsuspected capacities must be the more gratifying, as hitherto you had been reckoned amongst the ornamental politicians whose loftiest ambitions would be satisfied with a dignified Court office. For about a year you served a light apprenticeship under easygoing Lord Granville when he was making his accustomed muddle at the Foreign Office. In Mr. Gladstone's next Administration you spent a few months as Lord-in-Waiting to the late Queen, and again in 1892-5 you were promoted to the expensive and thankless post of Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. As Mr. John Morley was Chief Secretary, and pledged to carry out the Home Rule policy which he had been largely instrumental in forcing on Mr. Gladstone in 1886, it was hardly to be

expected that you would be given much initiative. It was your special function, if possible, to keep the Loyalists in hand and conciliate, as far as might be, the excitable society of the Irish capital. That you succeeded in this undertaking would be to exaggerate the possibilities of social charm and political tact. For a time the Viceregal Court was almost boycotted, except by those who were brought into official relations with the Lord-Lieutenant. The ambiguous and unaccustomed position in which you were placed may, perhaps, have accentuated a certain natural hauteur which in itself would not be unpleasant or unimpressive. Malicious stories were circulated in Unionist circles about the seriousness with which you assumed the privileges of a delegated royalty. Probably those tales were invented by the malicious wit of people who would mock at an archangel if he came to them in the guise of a Home Rule statesman. The bitterness of party feud while you ruled at the Castle has not been surpassed within the memory of living man, and you were the victim of animosities which personally you are incapable of arousing. Still, the stories stuck to you and followed you to England, for Irish resentments do not easily pass away. It was even rumoured that after you came home you did not find it easy to resume the status of a mere subject. But nobody heeded these irresponsible inventions, though the anecdotes are still circulated,

and probably believed, in the inner circles of Dublin Unionism. It is possible, that, if the Administration of which you were a subordinate though imposing member had survived to the normal length of days, you might have made a social success of your Vice-royalty. The grand manner and the fine appearance should have appealed to the critical ladies of Ireland. The men of a sporting race might have been won over by your keenness in the hunting field, while your love of literature and art must have commended you to the scholars and critics of an academical and highly cultured city.

If your position was uncomfortable in 1892-5 it cannot be much happier in the present Government, though you have been admitted to the Cabinet and vindicated your title to be treated as a serious politician. Your Radical colleagues are pressing measures which it is known that you dislike. But what can you do? You might threaten to resign, and in the last resort you could act upon the threat. But you must be well aware that your defection would not shake the Ministry. It might be difficult to replace you in the House of Lords with an equally adroit manager of recalcitrant peers. But you have no authority in the country, and such influence as you may possess in public affairs depends upon your official position. In this respect you stand on precisely the same footing as several other

adherents of the Liberal Imperialist persuasion. Your only chance of making your voice heard is by acting in concert with the other Rosebery items, so that the split, when it comes, may be long enough and deep enough to wreck the whole Government. Lord Crewe, Lord Tweedmouth, Lord Elgin, Sir Henry Fowler—even if they all should go together—would not sensibly weaken the Radical remnant. If they are to impress the Prime Minister they must induce the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Foreign Secretary and the Minister for War to co-operate with them. It cannot be a pleasant reflection for a man so proud and capable as you are to know that he has been marked down for destruction by the demagogues of the party, and yet to feel that he has no effective means of retaliation. You have to choose between a premature retirement, which would condemn you to impotence, and waiting for the long-delayed opportunity for a general protest. It is not suggested that you will be induced to stay on with the Government merely for the pleasure and emoluments of office, but, with the example before your eyes of your friend and father-in-law condemned to ploughing a lonely and singularly irresponsive furrow, you naturally shrink from imitating his act of political suicide.

Like Lord Rosebery, you have other resources than public life. You also have been an eager,

though less successful, votary of the Turf. You are a favourite in Society. With the library and art collections bequeathed by your versatile, delightful and distinguished father, you inherited no small share of his literary taste and discrimination. You have even written verses, and, on provocation, may do so again. Perhaps you are seen to greatest advantage when you are taking the chair at a Literary Fund dinner. In the polished style of oratory which becomes such an occasion, and in the unaffected sympathy with which you enter into the struggles and sufferings of men whose ideals you can appreciate, you would not be surpassed even by the gifted statesman with whom you are allied by marriage and united in the common pursuit of some of the nobler objects open to the ambitions of fortune's favourites. It is to be hoped that you will not be tempted by your opportunities for indulging a fastidious taste to turn your back in disgust on the rough and tumble of party politics. So long as such men as yourself find it possible to remain on terms with the Liberal Party we can still hope that some control will be exercised over the wilder impulses and more vulgar spirits. It was noticed that in the hottest moments of the Education controversy you never permitted yourself to indulge in even vague menace against a Chamber which you could not bring round to your own way of thinking. While the Prime Minister was dash-

ing off random letters for publication, while Mr. Birrell was passionately declaiming against the peers, and Mr. Lloyd George was beating the drum up and down the country, you showed, by the cold and businesslike discussion of sections and sub-sections, that you took no account of the outside agitation, but looked upon the House of Lords as a permanent institution capable of solid legislative functions. You are, perhaps, convinced that the relations between the two Chambers stand in need of readjustment, and, so far, your sympathy may go with the general declarations of the Government. But a few weeks ago you were called upon to discharge an uncongenial function when you opposed the motion of Lord Cawdor for appointing a select Committee to consider the best method of broadening the basis of the Upper House. As a member of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Administration you are forced to stand aloof from a reform which as an independent statesman you would be anxious to promote.

You are a pleasing illustration of the anomalous truth that political capacity is quite as effectively generated by the hereditary as by the elective system. Your distinguished qualities of mind and character are generally recognised. But it would be idle flattery to suggest that by your unaided natural gifts you would have worked your way up to your present exalted position. Yet let us con-

trast you with all but five or six of the self-made men in either House of Parliament. Is there one amongst them who could have piloted the Education Bill, almost to harbour, more skilfully, more patiently, and more tenaciously? You need not shrink from comparison with Mr. Birrell, who is a fine example of middle-class energy and talent. In the Commons, with a strong and willing majority behind him, he had a far easier task than was laid upon you in the Lords. Yet he did not acquit himself better in the popular assembly, and might, perhaps, have broken down if, like you, he had been confronted with long rows of hostile faces. To the man, however strong and self-adapting, who has to climb from the lower to the higher places in public life, the arts of statesmanship are slow of acquirement. The young peer, on the other hand, unless he devotes himself entirely to a life of dissipation and frivolity, gains an early training in the senate, and picks up, almost unconsciously, that knowledge of men and assemblies which is seldom attained by any politician who enters the House of Commons after he is forty years of age. Simply by giving yourself the trouble of being born and by not making wanton havoc of your chances in life you have become as useful and effective a statesman as though you had spent the better part of your energies in "struggling for existence on provincial platforms." You may recognise the phrase, since

it represents one of Lord Rosebery's indiscretions, and enforces one of the truths which your Radical associates insist upon ignoring.

I am, my Lord,

Your obedient servant,

FRIAR JOHN.

The Right Hon. the EARL OF CREWE.







LORD MORLEY

## MR. JOHN MORLEY

SIR,

It would be an unpardonable exaggeration to say of the most gifted and accomplished member of the Cabinet that his face was his fortune. Yet the popular reading of your clean, cold, intellectual features has stood you in good stead with a democracy which respects character, though its chief rewards are bestowed on truculent subserviency. It has also been your fortune to earn a nickname which is a standing witness of inflexible probity. But you are neither an ascetic nor a pragmatic. There are veterans of Bohemia who remember you, in your early days, as a gay and genial companion. Even when your reputation had been established as a man of letters and interpreter of Radical doctrine you did not turn your back upon the pleasures of the town. In the long years of intimate association with Mr. Chamberlain it is safe to assume that the conversation did not turn exclusively on party tactics and unauthorised programmes. You were often seen together at the theatre, and the enjoyment which you both derived, though you could be severely critical if you pleased, leaned rather to appreciation than analysis. You have warmed both hands at the fire of life, and done romantic things

without repenting of them afterwards. It is gratifying to know that sharp divergencies of opinion did not diminish your regard for the statesman whose "genius for friendship" you have recently extolled. Over the Irish question, twenty years ago, there was, no doubt, war to the knife, so far as such a phrase may be used of a conflict free from personal animosity. There is, indeed, no bitterness in your nature, though so far as the world knows you have never undergone the mellowing experience of modifying the views with which you entered upon your public career. There is nothing which more effectually predisposes a man to the exercise of charity than the sense that his own conduct may require the plea of extenuating circumstances.

You can stand on your record and defy the critics to find fault with anything except your opinions. Other Liberal politicians may be charged, whether fairly or unfairly, with having adopted Home Rule in order to escape being drummed out of the party. But you were the main author of Mr. Gladstone's conversion, though it must be confessed that your abstract arguments were strongly reinforced by the result of the General Election in 1885, when Mr. Parnell had a casting vote of about eighty to give to one or the other of two evenly balanced parties. Never, however, has it been suggested or thought that you were influenced in your policy by the hope of Office. Yet it was inevitable that you should

become Chief Secretary both in 1886 and 1893, and assist in working the two Bills which you had largely helped to draft. It was not an easy task for the Radical politicians who had unrelentingly denounced every form of coercion to maintain even an appearance of order at periods when the Nationalists were bent on keeping the Liberal Government up to the mark, while the Orangemen saw no reason for making things easy. Though you were exposed to acute criticism, and deserved some of the censure you received, it was agreed that, on the whole, allowance being made for the special difficulties, you did far better than had been expected. It was, of course, impossible for a man of your nature and antecedents either to understand Irishmen or be understood by them. So far as you succeeded it was because you did not try, and therefore avoided the pitfalls of the Englishman who affects to put on Irish sympathies. Logical yourself, you do not look for logic in others. Yourself acting on principle, you have a philosophic tolerance for persons guided by impulse or intrigue.

It is generally supposed that you are a hard-and-fast exponent of the old-fashioned Benthamite Radicalism. This is so far true that you hold unflinchingly by the Individualism which rests upon self-help and self-reliance, and in 1895, at the General Election, you refused to support an Eight Hours Bill. The sturdy miners of Newcastle appre-

ciated your independence. They called you Honest John and sent you about your business. The setback was more than compensated by the compliment. In spite of your resistance to the then new Trade Unionism, you are by no means a blind adherent of the *Laisser-faire* school. As your early essays show, you have a kindness for the sentimental side of the French Revolution philosophy. In this respect, though, perhaps, in no other, you resemble John Mill, whose economic orthodoxy was streaked with Socialism. But with the Socialism expounded by the Independent Labour party you have nothing in common, since you detest every sort of compulsion, whether the tyrant be King, Parliament, or People—meaning majority of the People. It is stated that in the last two years the pressure applied by the Socialists has been more stoutly withstood by the Indian Secretary than by certain other members of the Cabinet who make a greater parade of incorruptibility. You would be a better man than some of those valiant colleagues to go tiger hunting with—once you had decided to make a start. But there would always be a chance of your saying that tigers were noble beasts which should not be hunted.

Steadily did you oppose the re-establishment of British authority and the Khedive's arms in Upper Egypt. You discerned aggression and predicted disaster, so that men called you the False Prophet of the Sudan. Generally, it may be said, you detest all

wars not waged in defence of liberty. You consistently denounced the policy which, as you thought, led to the South African struggle, but you never joined in the abuse directed against British administrators and soldiers. On the whole you are in sympathy with the views, though not with the language, of the anti-Imperial party. The story is told of you that after hearing a distinguished lady's declamation during the late war you said that you felt inclined to go into another room and sing "God save the Queen." Possibly your ideal of political perfectness would best be realised in a compact European state without foreign possessions or over-sea responsibilities—an insular Belgium without its Congo appanage. Yet you are content to accept the British Empire as an existing fact, and be a faithful trustee of the great Continent placed in your keeping. When you were appointed last year to be Secretary of State for India the misgivings were general and deep amongst people who cared for the progress and stability of our rule in the East. The only hope was that you were rather an old man, not specially industrious, and possessed of many other interests. You might, therefore, be content to allow your permanent staff to do your business for you and give you an easy time. No such thing. You buckled at once to work, and in a short time had acquired an astonishingly firm grip of the most important problems of your Department.

Very soon it became evident that you were not going to play into the hand of the Congress party in India or of their partially demented friends at home. Thereupon you were marked down for ruin. On the Budget day last year an ambuscade was laid by these fanatic tribesmen, and a hostile resolution was nearly carried which would have involved your resignation. From this unmerited humiliation you were saved by Opposition votes—an intervention which did not endear you to the Radicals. For months past they have been denouncing you as antiquated and renegade—you who have never recanted a doctrine or played false to a friend. Nevertheless, you profited by the warning, and this year you have been ready for the adversaries in your camp. The statement of policy made last week contained a definite scheme of reform which was bound to be approved by all Liberals not of the extreme Left, while you earned the applause of all moderate men on both sides of the House by an eloquent and argued vindication of the principles on which the British authority is justified in the East. There was no taint in it of a vainglorious patriotism, no excuse for rule by the sword, nothing which the most acid or sanctimonious could use as a handle against the speaker. This was an adroit performance, and shows that, when occasion demands, you can combine the innocence of the philosophical dove with the wisdom of the parliamentary opportunist.



During the brief spell of power enjoyed by the Gladstone and Rosebery Administrations between 1892 and 1895 your influence was exerted against the new Imperialism, but, with the collapse of Home Rule, the authority of the Chief Secretary diminished. For the intrigues and manœuvrings of politicians you possess neither relish nor aptitude. But though you were never in accord with Sir William Harcourt's outlook on public affairs, you could more easily have accepted him as Mr. Gladstone's successor than the Foreign Secretary who had just played so vigorous a part in reasserting the supremacy of Great Britain in the Valley of the Nile. The occupation of Egypt was in your eyes a criminal foolishness. Not merely was it a sin against native rights, but it also kept up a constant feeling of irritation in France. Although you have never developed strong views on foreign policy beyond insisting on the duty of non-intervention in European affairs and ensuing peace both in Asia and Africa, you have always kept in your heart a specially warm place for the people who held up the banner of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity against an Absolutist combination, and whose literature has inspired you with some of your finest thoughts. You look coldly upon Liberal Imperialism because you regard it as an illogical confusion of inconsistent ideals. In the same spirit you have no tolerance for loose phrasing and ragged sentences. As a platform

speaker you have inspired moments, and almost alone of contemporary politicians you venture to address the people in terms of political philosophy. Your dignified and thoughtful perorations, not unworthy of another literary statesman whom you have interpreted to the present generation, are, as a rule, not more successful than were his in the House of Commons. It was seldom that Edmund Burke could hold the attention of Parliament, and most of the Hon. Members who admire your unique qualities prefer to wait to read your glowing periods in the morning newspapers.

Adversaries wishing to disparage you as a politician have extolled your attainments in the world of letters and hinted not obscurely that in venturing from the study into the public arena you are putting your talents to a bad use. It is not clear, however, that your work as a critic and biographer has been impaired by your labours in the House of Commons. In mere point of style you are never likely to surpass the brilliant studies which you wrote as a comparatively young man of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot, or the ever admirable essay on "Compromise" which is a fitting pendant to Mill's on "Liberty." Nor can it be said of the "Gladstone" that, from the artistic point of view, it is equal to "Cobden," which in its way is a masterpiece, since it presents a clear, convincing, and attractive picture of a figure neither imposing nor

ingratiating. Yet we realise the restless energy and contagious enthusiasm of the great propagandist, and readers who have least sympathy with his objects are enabled to understand why he succeeded in his prodigious task. In the "Gladstone" you had a far more fascinating topic, but the massive material was overpowering and the time at your disposal too limited. It is the hope of all lovers of good biography that some day you will enter on the task of reducing that enormous compilation to one-third of its present size, omitting what has become irrelevant, compressing the narrative of complicated episodes within their due bounds, and giving us a real appreciation of the man as you knew him, telling the whole truth as you have told it of Cobden. Even as it stands, the book contains many passages which are models of simple narrative such as no other living man of letters could have written, and pages of the scholarly eloquence with which you dignify the calling of a journalist. When Greenwood and Morley were using their pens in the service of their respective parties it was impossible for the most superfine *dilettante* to look down upon the London Press, and it may fairly be claimed that the upward movement which they started has not spent the whole of its force.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

FRIAR JOHN.

To the Right Hon. J. MORLEY, M.P.

## MR. A. BIRRELL

SIR,

By this time, probably, you have discovered that politics is not so easy a business as you fancied when, eighteen years ago, you made your appearance in the House of Commons. It is not cleverness that pays in the long run, so Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman has recently told us. He had reason—being Prime Minister. Your talents are nearly as conspicuous as your failures. All your life, until you became a Minister, you had been a prize-boy, and the experience has not been good for your character. It is not suggested that you are puffed up: for a versatile and very ambitious man you are singularly free from self-conceit. But you have been misled by facile success. Yet you should have been undeceived by the tenour of your professional career. The very considerable knowledge which you had acquired at Trinity Hall as to the principles of law, and subsequently developed by study in London, amply justified your appointment as Professor at University College, but it did not bring you profitable clients, or make you a good opinion. Perhaps the most remarkable consequence of your treatise on the Duties and Liabilities of Trustees was to provide an adversary in Parliament with a



MR. BIRRELL



text for condemning, as from your own mouth, an essential feature in your Education Bill. Probably, however, your thoughts were not greatly troubled by seeing yourself outstripped in the race for practice by men whose attainments you might fairly despise. In literature you found solace, occupation, and reasonably handsome emolument. The note struck in your charming essays was precisely suited to the taste of an ever-widening circle of paying readers. Half-educated and semi-intellectual, they knew, or had picked up, enough to distinguish the charlatan from the scholar. In the flood of uninstructed twaddle and gushing appreciations which pass nowadays for literary criticism they were delighted to come upon a writer who did not tax their brains, yet gave them intelligible and reproducible reasons for praising the books which they ought to admire. Moreover, though they could not analyse your style, they felt its merits, which are equally obvious and genuine. Your humour, too, bright and blameless, is satisfying to a generation which discovers subtlety in Mr. Barrie, sees philosophy in Dr. Ibsen, and looks on Mr. Shaw as quite a mordant satirist.

As you had thrown personality into your writings you entered public life with a ready-made character. It was assumed that the Mr. Birrell of the *belles lettres* would be the Mr. Birrell of the House of Commons. Nor did the incidents of your earlier career in Parliament, either as a debater at West-

minster or as a platform orator, serve to modify the not unnatural forecast. Your speeches were vigorous enough, but they betrayed no tinge of intolerance. By their moderation and reasonableness they did something to rehabilitate a discredited Radicalism. At the General Election in 1900 you took your beating in North-east Manchester with good sense and good temper. During the South African crisis, while you were too prudent to associate yourself prominently with the Liberal Imperialists, you studiously abstained from the anti-patriotic agitation. Steadily you gained favour with Liberals of all shades, and the Unionists, though they recognised an adroit and formidable adversary, read and marked, if they could not altogether digest, your lively comments on their policy. Your success last year in North Bristol, one of the most striking victories of your party, was, on personal grounds, welcomed by Conservatives, since they believed that as Minister of Education you would restrain the persecuting spirit of the political Nonconformists who had avowed to make an end of Church of England teaching in elementary schools.

They were justified in that hope, since you had, with unaccustomed unction, breathed a prayer that the same spirit which would govern your contemplated measure should guide the House of Commons in its deliberations. Nor has the sincerity of that over-sanguine manifesto been called into question



by fair-minded opponents. It is universally agreed that, if you had been permitted to direct the affairs of your Department, you would have offered terms which the Church of England and the other denominations might have found tolerable, though they could not affect to regard them as equitable. Such a scheme you had framed and pressed upon an almost unanimous Cabinet. With infinite pains and considerable tact you had talked over a section of the English Roman Catholics. Lord Ripon and an eminent dignitary had been persuaded that the plan would spare nearly all their schools, and that the havoc which it was to work would fall almost entirely upon the Church of England. They were deceived, no doubt, but, partly through your skillfulness and partly through their anxiety to give the Irish Nationalists an excuse for supporting a Ministry inclined to Home Rule, they had allowed themselves to be tickled into somnolence.

The plot was going on briskly when, at the last moment, the alarm was given from the directly opposite quarter. Mr. Lloyd George, acute in judgment and truculent in Nonconformity, set his friends in motion. They quickly saw that no net could be woven with meshes wide enough to let the Roman Catholics escape without also permitting a large number of the Anglicans to get away. At this point you made the blunder which wrecked your Bill and inflicted the first blow on your rising repu-

tation. You gave way to the pious fury of the political Dissenters, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that you surrendered your judgment to that of the Prime Minister. The proposals which you eventually laid before the House of Commons would not have been otherwise framed if you had set yourself to stir up a strife of creeds—the very result which you had laboured to avert. In vain did you exert all your suavity, all your dialectical ingenuity, to disarm opposition. Humour, sophistry, and menace were tried one after another, and when finally a confused and unworkable Bill had been sent to the House of Lords you paid a flying visit to your constituents and dared the Peers to meddle with the framework of a measure which, as you very well knew, the Board of Education would not have ventured to put into operation.

Still, almost to the end, you kept the Nonconformist flag flying. But all the time you were desperately anxious to get a Bill passed—some Bill, almost any Bill. In the confidential discussions which were held between representatives of the two Houses you and Lord Crewe showed yourselves ready, not, of course, to concede the full demand of the English and Roman Churches, but to assent to the minimum on which they were resolved to insist. Once again peace was in sight, but once again you failed to impose your will on the extreme men of your party. The Bill had to be abandoned, and,

somewhat unfairly, you were blamed for involving the Government in a signal collapse. You sought to cover your retreat by threats of administrative oppression, but you are not fitted by nature or training to do that kind of dirty work.

Clearly the Board of Education was no longer a place for you. Meantime, Mr. Bryce had rendered himself impossible at Dublin. By what process of reasoning the Prime Minister persuaded himself, and you were induced to think, that having broken down in Whitehall you might succeed at the Irish Office has never been revealed. Perhaps the explanation lies in the revelation of your weakness. The man then required as Chief Secretary was one who could be moulded by Mr. Redmond as you had been manipulated by Dr. Clifford. If that was the object it was brilliantly attained, since your Irish Council Bill was much more than a measure of Devolution. It was a substantial instalment of Home Rule, and, Nationalist denials notwithstanding, quite acceptable to the Irish Parliamentary party. Moreover, it would have been materially expanded if the Dublin Convention had put down a series of definite requisitions. You had managed both the reasonable Nationalists and the hesitating Imperialists, just as last year you managed the practicable Nonconformists and temporising Roman Catholics—with the same result. To your surprise and disgust you learned that Mr. Redmond had no authority to

speak for the Separatist movement, and a second time you were left in the lurch. In this case you did not enjoy the sportsman-like satisfaction of giving your backers a run for their money. You had understood neither the problem to be solved nor the persons you had to deal with.

The truth is that you are a man of letters, a man of feeling, perhaps a man of thought, but you are not a man of affairs. Statecraft does not consist of making effective speeches, in devising elaborate schemes on paper, and in meeting hostile comment. Otherwise the government of the country would be best conducted by a mixed Cabinet of chancery and common-law barristers, with some inspired demagogue for Prime Minister. What is required is a sense of human nature, with an intuitive or acquired power of trusting and mistrusting the right man on the proper occasion. Of the real Ireland committed to your keeping you know as little as of the religious sentiment—the prepossessions and prejudices, if you will—of the Churches and sects which you tried to bring into line together. Every kind of fanaticism is alien to your genial and rational temperament, since you have spent all your days on the upper crust, the upper middle-class crust, of a tolerant and intellectual little continent bounded by Lincoln's Inn, St. Stephen's, the Athenæum Club, and Westbourne Grove Chapel. Now and again you throw back to your strain of provincial earnestness, as when

you indulge in diatribes against the Bishops and temporal Peers, but it is only a passing mood of which you are half-ashamed. You have no more sympathy with the religious frame of mind represented by Lord Halifax or Mr. Lloyd George than with the patriotism of Mr. Redmond's masters at the Dublin Convention.

It does not follow, because you have not yet lived in the world, or faced the sterner forces of theological passion and national animosities, that you are unteachable. By the irony of events you have been placed in charge of Ireland when the agrarian troubles of the 'eighties are being revived by a determined and desperate organisation, and when the inheritors of Invincible traditions have won a renewed influence over the spirit of the people. As in consistency bound, you will try to govern with the ordinary law, but, in case that should be insufficient, would you have the courage to demand special powers? Already you have given up the attempt to gloze over outrage and intimidation, and frankly admit that the state of the country is causing you "considerable anxiety." If you were left alone, with the permanent Under-Secretary, to deal with the trouble and disorder, you would soon put down the mischief makers. For you have a will of your own, and would exercise it if set at defiance. The danger is that you may be talked over by the Prime Minister and some of his more reckless colleagues.

It is not in courage, but in judgment, that you have hitherto proved yourself deficient.

It is disheartening to your friends to recall that less than twelve months ago you were reckoned to stand first for the succession to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Mr. Asquith had estranged many Radicals by the reputed moderation of his views, and offended others by his uncompromising manner of expressing them. It was almost arranged that he should be set aside and you promoted to his place. Now the only question is whether you will survive another session. The position is not enviable. If you palter with riot and sedition you will bring ruin on the Government, and if you resort to coercion the Radicals will join the Nationalists in hounding you out of Office. You are so acutely conscious of the dilemma that you may try to find a third course. There is something to be said for indulgence to law-breakers, and something for prompt measures of repression. But the sure road to disaster is to combine both methods: to look on apathetically while the secret societies establish a reign of terror, and apply force when they have become unmanageable. Your career will be spoiled if you cannot shake off the sickly air of irresolution.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

FRIAR JOHN.

The Rt. Hon. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, K.C., M.P.





MR. LLOYD GEORGE



THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE  
(MR. LLOYD GEORGE)

SIR,

You are better praised than trusted, and more denounced than disliked. The qualities that get you most often into trouble represent the more sterling side of your character. For the British Empire and the Church of England you entertain a disinterested aversion, and your angry outbursts proceed from genuine passion. This your adversaries are beginning to understand, and they make the sort of allowance which tolerant Englishmen are always ready to extend to every kind of fanaticism. Some of your political friends are less indulgent, and put you down as insincere because they know you to be an inveterate and successful intriguer. Nor can they be altogether blamed for suspecting an old associate in political conspiracy. Naturally, they think that the suppleness displayed in their cause may hereafter be turned against them. The elaborate legal chicanery by which the Welsh Nonconformist Radicals hoped to break down the Education Act of 1902 was invented and worked by the man who, since he became a Minister, has employed all his skill in holding them in check. For many months

past your conduct has been keenly canvassed in the Principality. There has even been a talk of expelling you from the Welsh party, and threatening your seat at Carnarvon. When you took office under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman it had been imagined that your first care would be to push the cause of Disestablishment ; yet, while you speak of your zeal as being still unabated, your energy seems to have been principally occupied in finding excuses for the delay of the Government in commencing its attack on the Church of England. Some of the critics seem to have been conciliated, but there is a formidable section of enthusiasts who mean to have your blood. In order to put yourself straight with public opinion among the Welsh Nonconformists you think it politic to indulge in almost frantic abuse of the Establishment. Nor is the effort difficult, since you are then speaking from your heart, and enjoy the sensation of giving a free rein to your Celtic exuberance.

The same double tendency is exhibited in your dealings with Imperial questions. In the House of Commons the other day you spoke with unrestrained fury about the South African war, neither remembering nor caring that beside you, on the Ministerial bench, were seated men who had on many occasions declared and attested their approval of that national effort. It did not matter to you that men recalled the ignominious day when you

came forward on a Birmingham platform as a champion of the Boer cause, and had to save your skin by escaping in a policeman's uniform. The outbreak last week showed that you had not modified the opinions which six or seven years ago made you one of the most unpopular men in Great Britain. It also illustrates the kind of opposition which has to be encountered within the Cabinet by statesmen who cherish any recollection of the period when they stood up with Lord Rosebery, and for the time prevented the Liberal party from being submerged in an anti-national movement. Now it is your section which is in the ascendant, and we can imagine what quarter would be given to a recalcitrant Imperialist. Yet your friends are dismayed and disgusted to find that there are limits to your prejudice. It had been confidently expected that you would join with zest in trampling upon the Colonial Premiers when you were put up to argue at the Conference against their request for Preference. You did, indeed, offer an argumentative defence of our existing fiscal system. Not the most obdurate Cobdenite could impeach the orthodoxy of your views. But they were urged with a moderation and courtesy that presented an almost startling contrast to the *doctrinaire* lecturings of Mr. Asquith and the snappish sciolism of Mr. Winston Churchill. Men who disagreed profoundly with the conclusion willingly admitted that you had behaved with states-

manlike consideration, and done something to reduce the offence given by your colleagues.

As President of the Board of Trade, you are making an excellent record, and what most people in December, 1905, considered almost the worst of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's appointments has been more than justified. It was feared that the politician who had signalised himself by unmeasured attacks on Mr. Chamberlain would forthwith attempt to turn things upside-down at Whitehall and hunt, high and low, for any and every trace of the accursed thing Protectionism. On the contrary, you have shown yourself eager—within the limits of your economic theory—to organise and develop British commerce. The doctrine of Free Imports is too holy to be tampered with, but it is not necessarily linked with that of *laissez-faire*. By an arrangement with the Foreign Office, steps are being taken to stir up the estimable gentlemen who act as British Consuls in foreign countries, and hitherto have faithfully carried out the spirit of their instructions from Downing Street. In the art of doing little or nothing that branch of the service was unsurpassed. Henceforth an effort will be made to employ Government machinery for helping men of business in this country to obtain information as to openings for their capital and enterprise abroad. More than this, direct encouragement will be offered to trade within the Empire, and a system of

commercial agents in the Colonies is to be established, which should partially meet the wishes expressed by the Premiers at the Imperial Conference. The announcement was received by the Radical Press with almost complete silence. "This sort of thing," it was hinted, "was all very well so far as it went, but it might easily go too far." The credit of the idea may belong to other men, but you adopted it and, more difficult, carried it through the House of Commons.

It was with accents of pained surprise that the zealots of your party hailed your plan last year for equalising some of the conditions under which the competition is carried on between British and foreign shippers. Under previous legislation some of the requirements imposed by the Board of Trade for the comfort and safety of the crews were in practice confined to British vessels. As the compliance with these humane and proper regulations involved very considerable expense, it is obvious that your owners were *pro tanto* handicapped as against foreign rivals. By making the application universal for all craft resorting to British ports you did an act of justice to your countrymen which has been warmly appreciated. But, of course, you were far too prudent to lay emphasis on this side of your policy. It was the humanitarian aspect you insisted upon, and the Radical critics had nothing to do but sulkily acquiesce. You are pursuing a similar end,

and by almost identical means, in your legislation this year in regard to patents. In future it will not be easy for a foreign inventor or purchaser of a foreign man's invention to obtain protection in this country while he not only works the idea abroad, but prevents it from being worked here at all. The removal of this glaring hardship is a sign that you at least realise that Free Trade and *laissez-faire* are on their trial. If they are to be saved in this country they must, at least, be pruned of their excrescences.

Perhaps it is because you are still a young man that you have shown yourself so much more teachable than most of your colleagues. Yet you started as Minister with no advantage except your remarkable cleverness. Your early years were spent in acquiring the means of setting up in business as a solicitor, and nothing in your speeches betrays an acquaintance with matters lying outside the range of your profession. Your career was, no doubt, assisted by your political activity, and you are much too acute a man to speak in Parliament without having got up at least one side of the case. In the debate on the House of Lords the other day you crammed yourself with a long list of the historical iniquities committed by that assembly of tyrants. But the demonstration was not altogether successful; honourable members, if they do not know much themselves, have a way of distinguishing

genuine from affected learning. Like other public persons who "get on," you have had unpleasant experiences, but have been sensible enough to profit by them. It was your fate to incur one of Mr. Gladstone's stateliest rebukes. A gang of solid Non-conformists, amongst whom you were especially active, had been opposing a Bill under which the Church of England would be enabled to get rid of scandalous and unworthy clerics. To this you and your associates objected, because every reform thus carried out would weaken the case for Disestablishment. The old statesman spoke out his mind about such tactics, and the victims of his indignation winced under the lash. Even more humiliating was your failure last year when you put yourself forward to help Mr. Birrell with his Education Bill. You felt, not unnaturally, that the part relating to Wales should be placed under your special care. It is not, perhaps, worth recalling how many drafts and redrafts were proposed and rejected in a few hours. The incident is only mentioned here because it proves how recent is the growth of your parliamentary aptitude. Last session you were a bungler; now you are reputed to be a skilled performer. Even when allowance has been made for your undeniable quickness, the transformation seems a trifle too sudden to be permanent.

As to your future, it is difficult to form an estimate. Nothing you have said or done, or under-

taken to do, suggests that you have in you the capacity for leadership. It is not, perhaps, your fault that your public utterances reveal none of the thought or knowledge which the English people have generally expected to discover in a Prime Minister. Yet other self-made men have found time to read and think. So far, there has been no indication of your having interest outside your political hack work, or being able either to cherish an ideal or form an abstract conception. It would be a grave declension, even from Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, if the destinies of a great party were ever committed to the guidance of such a man as you at present are. The chance is that you may grow: the fear is that you have no perception of a higher level than your plane. Not that you are self-satisfied or self-conceited. It is the universal opinion of all persons brought into contact with you that you are singularly unassuming in manner, eager to acquire information, and sympathetic in assimilating what you learn. These are invaluable qualities to an ambitious politician, but they will not lift him from second class to the first. By comparison with your colleagues your successes have been so striking, and your failures so inconspicuous, that there is a strong temptation to overrate your gifts. But your argument is generally thin; your humour, such as it is, is apt to pass into a mild buffoonery; and your invective lacks finish. If ever you reach the highest



place in the Liberal party it will be through the demerits or misfortunes of your rivals rather than your own ability. Already, it must be confessed, they seem to be dropping out of the race. Mr. Asquith, always a wobbler for all his solid air, just now appears to be wobbling away from Imperialism and towards Radicalism, though at any time he might wobble backwards. Mr. Haldane has talked everybody except himself out of breath. Mr. Birrell is becoming a trifle absurd. You are younger than any of these, you are more acute, and you have that streak of Celtic passion which may almost pass itself off for genius. But you also have the failings of your countrymen. They know you best, and they do not rate you so highly as do some of your English friends.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

FRIAR JOHN.

The Rt. Hon. D. LLOYD GEORGE.

MR. R. B. HALDANE

SIR,

You are beginning to be found out. It is perhaps unfair that you should be suspected of duplicity, for you have always been quite open in playing a double part. Yet you are detested by the Radicals, who mean to get rid of you, and distrusted by the Moderate Liberals because they fear that you will fail them when the pinch comes. You are not a strong man, for it is notorious that you are not master in your own Department, and allow yourself to be overshadowed by a stronger personality. Another strain of weakness was revealed by your obsequious telegram to the American Secretary of State about the Jamaica incident. Even a time-server should be able to think a fortnight in front of him. Without seeking to penetrate the secret mysteries of the Cabinet, it may be assumed that last year you fought your hardest to invest the Trade Disputes Bill with some appearance of fair dealing. The persuasive qualities which earned you a well-merited reputation in the Chancery Division had so far triumphed in the secret conclave that your colleagues were induced to make an offer to the Trade Unionists which it was known they would reject. But in your platform speeches you had pledged



LORD HALDANE



yourself "not to toe the line" of the Independent Labour party, and something had to be done to save your face. It was at once evident that your scruples would be satisfied with a colourable concession. When the Prime Minister announced in Parliament his surrender to the demand for class legislation, in favour of artisans against their employers, no protest was heard from his Minister for War. Moreover, you complied with the unwritten Cabinet law that a Member who has been overruled shall signify in a public manner his acceptance of the decision forced upon him by his colleagues. It was a shambling yet ingenious speech in which you recanted before the House of Commons the opinions to which you had unequivocally committed yourself. In a sense it was candid, since nobody could have been deceived into thinking that the renegade had changed his mind, while if it had been intended to conciliate the Labour men it might have been dismissed as a rather clumsy failure.

But that was not its purpose. The sacrifice had been made, not with a view of making a lasting peace, but in order to postpone hostilities. This has been the keynote of your Ministerial career. You have always been playing against time. When you undertook the administration of the War Office and the reorganisation of the Army, you professed yourself appalled by the magnitude of the problem and the intricacy of its details. An interval for study, a

term for clear thinking, we were told, was necessary. The request was absolutely proper, and excited high hopes amongst all genuine military reformers. Mr. Brodrick had been hustled into his scheme for six Army Corps, and Mr. Arnold-Forster, with natural impetuosity, had plunged into an impracticable scheme which his own party could not accept. Both had failed because they had not allowed themselves leisure for laying their plans and also because the country or Parliament would not give them a chance of working out their designs. But at last, it was thought, a War Secretary had been discovered who insisted on the right of full and unfettered deliberation. How misplaced was this confidence ! Within a few months you had yielded to the Radicals' impatience. They clamoured for an immediate reduction on the Army Estimates as an earnest of the root and branch economies which they expect you to carry out hereafter. The quiet, resolute man—as you believe yourself to be—promptly climbed down from his philosophical tree. You knocked off 20,000 men from the Regular Army, cut down the Guards, and reduced an already insufficient Artillery.

This was the outcome of the prodigious intellect applied to politics ! Why, any War Office clerk could have done as well. So many men cost so much money. Then away with the men ! This is not the place to argue about the military policy of the

British Empire or to criticise the voluble explanation with which the House of Commons was for several hours entertained and bemused. The verdict of the practical soldiers was that you had treated the country with a dressing of the moral liniment which in the vernacular of the barracks is described as eye-wash. But you got no thanks from the Radicals, even for the saving on the Estimates, since you accompanied the gift with sinful talk about increasing the efficiency of that instrument of oppression, the British Army. After having found salvation with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, you were convicted from your own mouth of hankering after the forbidden meats of Liberal Imperialism. In the judgment of the Little England party you presented a melancholy parallel to the Rev. Mr. Creedy, that missionary of the Higher Light, who reverted to the manners of an atavistic barbarism.

It is an undeserved imputation. Not a man in the Army believes that you can perform your promises ; that you will have an Expeditionary Force of 160,000 ready at short notice for foreign service ; that you will keep up a special contingent as a Reserve for the first six months of war ; or that the Territorial Army, a body of untrained amateurs estimated at 300,000, could be trusted with the duties of home defence. As for its meeting the need for military expansion in a National crisis, that is merely one of your Parliamentary figments. Like

many clever men, you underrate the capacity of average persons. What you are trying to do is to persuade the peace fanatics that you are killing the British Army by a scientific process of painless extinction, while you assure the soldiers that you are only concerned to place it on a sound basis. Unfortunately, the two parties compare notes, and the game is up.

There was a time—already it seems remote—when you were credited with keeping Lord Rosebery's conscience. It is not surprising that you lost control of that elusive force, which, like the elements revealed by modern physicists, operates in places where it is neither seen nor felt. During the late Parliament it was known that you were pulling the strings of the League which accomplished the end of its being in giving a dinner to Mr. Asquith, and declaring "war to the knife and fork" against the pro-Boers. They were to be converted, silenced or suppressed. In the result, as we know, it is the League that was decapitated and eaten up by the Little Englanders. Some of its chief members, it is true, are still but half digested, and occasionally show signs of disagreeing violently with the system into which they have been thrust. It is with a sense of morbid curiosity that a callous public is watching the agonising process of political assimilation.

Beyond a doubt, you and your associates are sincere in your repugnance to the anti-Imperial policy



of the Liberal party as it has been moulded by the Prime Minister. It would be far simpler and more comfortable not to struggle against the overmastering current. Or it would be still simpler and, perhaps, more comfortable to break, once for all, with men whose aims you disapprove, and boldly take up your abode in an independent Cave. Why, then, do you retain a false and embarrassing position? Your Radical detractors say blankly that you are staying on because you know that if you resign you would be snuffed out. This is unfair and untrue. Probably you find a certain exhilaration in the daily task of trimming and balancing and just maintaining an unstable equilibrium. It is a form of intellectual sport which appeals to your subtle nature. Perhaps also you are still waiting for an opportunity. In your judgment, the moment has not arrived for an effective vindication of Moderate Liberalism.

But why is it that, with such views, you are tolerated as the colleague of a Radical Prime Minister? Because you are a hostage for the Moderate Liberals. Of course he could defy them if he chose, and were content to rely upon the extreme men. But he has the country to think of as well as the House of Commons. It is your inglorious function to act as one of his most serviceable bonnets. He has to give periodical assurances to his peace-at-any-price friends about setting an example to the civilised world and putting an end to "provocative" ex-

penditure on armaments. But in order to keep his Moderate Liberals in tow the War Minister (a gentleman of unimpeachable patriotism) is sent to break bread with the Lord Mayor and City Corporation, who are informed that Great Britain would reconsider its defensive policy if its overtures at The Hague should not be met in a spirit of reciprocity. At the General Election the Prime Minister got many votes from solid men of business who were afraid that Mr. Chamberlain's fiscal reforms might upset the existing basis of trade. But it would be shaken to its foundations by a war, or alarm of war, at a time when our defences had been let down to danger point.

"Haldane is a safe man, a sound man, a sensible man," say the puffy princes of retail trade, who roll up their fortunes from dealing in dumped foreign trash. In their gratitude for the comfort you give to their mercenary optimism they forget you are a philosopher or forgive that finical enormity. Indeed, they are rather pleased to hear of your going up and down the country and talking of things that do not matter—the study of Thought, the future of Science, the functions of a University, or the meaning of Individuality. These effusions are charitably ignored as the toys of your leisure, or as instruments employed in the great art of advertisement. But it would be doing you an injustice to hint that your indefatigable exertions on all kinds of platforms are

actuated by self-seeking. You are genuinely enamoured of your own ideas and believe that their author possesses an unrivalled gift of exposition. It was not with any underhand design of preventing a discussion on your first Army scheme that you spent several hours in explaining it to Parliament. Simply, you have so much to say that where ten minutes would satisfy an ordinary man you require an hour. The volubility is becoming a disease which may end in ranking you among the bores of Westminster. At present you are regarded with wondering admiration by the Labour party. They dislike your views but respect your erudition. The amount of your learning may, perhaps, be exaggerated in an assembly which, with many new men of remarkable cleverness, contains few who can be credited with trained and critical judgment. Dr. Macnamara, for instance, may properly regard you as a prodigy of attainment, but Mr. Herbert Paul would satisfy his well-known passion for eulogy with a far more modest estimate. Nevertheless, you are a sincere and thoroughgoing student of the best philosophy that Germany has turned out. If, when you paid your visit to the Fatherland, you had accumulated data for reorganising the metaphysical courses at the Scottish Universities, you might, perhaps, have done more solid work than by essaying to acclimatise in this country the methods of the German General Staff. But it must not be imagined that your philo-

sophical talents are quite thrown away at the War Office. The moment may come when you will naturally appeal to the mysticisms of ontology to get yourself out of a tight place in the House of Commons. As to Being and Not-Being, are they not essentially identical? Fundamentally, then, what difference can be said to exist between an Army in being and an Army not in being? The demonstration which we anticipate will be so lucidly confusing that only the practical soldiers will see through the sophistication, and they will not be able to expose it. It is always easy, said Lord Randolph Churchill, to score off a military man in debate.

There is one anecdote in English history which may be recalled to your attention. When the elder Pitt was told by a colleague that the men and money could not be got ready for an expedition on a certain required date, he replied: "If the men and money are not ready at ten o'clock on Thursday next, your Grace's head shall roll at your Grace's feet." That was the way, remarked Carlyle, to speak to an incapable Minister. Have you given us any reason to believe that on an Imperial emergency the men and money would be ready at ten o'clock on Thursday morning?

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

FRIAR JOHN.

The Rt. Hon. R. B. HALDANE.





SIR EDWARD GREY

## SIR EDWARD GREY

SIR,

No compliment was intended when Sir Charles Dilke the other day congratulated you on having done what Mr. Gladstone declared to have become impossible. You have conducted in the House of Commons the business of the Foreign Office. How has this political feat been accomplished ? Like most great performances, it is simple when one knows how to do it. You have baffled the amateur diplomatists of the popular Chamber by sedulously staying out of range. When a question on International policy has been addressed to the Secretary of State, a concise typewritten reply has been read out by a subordinate who has been instructed not in any circumstances to be drawn into a supplementary discussion. The busybodies and professional hecklers are not even bowled out ; they simply do not get an innings. On very few occasions, when a detailed statement appears necessary, your speech blandly ignores the possibility of two opinions being held as to British policy. With an air of dignified sincerity you explain the conditions and announce the decision. That, the audience is given to understand, is the end of the matter. The

idea of being led into controversy does not seem to have suggested itself to the Minister's scheme of duty. This attitude you have kept up without betraying a trace of the disdain which the son of a great Whig family may be suspected of entertaining towards democratic interlopers. Never is a handle given for attack or an excuse for expressing irritation. You stand up before the Commons as a model of political candour and official courtesy.

The exasperation is not less bitter because it has to be suppressed. The object of Sir Charles Dilke in paying you his left-hand tribute was to stir up odium against the perfection of your bureaucratic method, and to suggest that you were not in harmony with the popular element in the Liberal party. With admirable adroitness you passed over the imputation as though you had not observed it, and set yourself right with the Radicals by incidentally remarking on the happy concord which had been maintained within the Cabinet in regard both to domestic and foreign affairs. There is no need to examine closely the historical accuracy of that politic declaration. Why rake up old stories about the Trade Disputes Bill or Irish Home Rule or Old Age Pensions? These are insular trifles which may well have escaped the recollection of a Foreign Secretary engrossed in the affairs of his department. All parties in Parliament, except the Socialists and a few extreme Radicals, are well content that the



management of our external business should be carried on by a statesman who holds himself almost as aloof as Mr. Speaker himself from the disputes which agitate mere average hand-to-mouth politicians. You live upon a different plane, and, no matter what freak in home legislation be favoured by your colleagues, their most indignant adversaries will not call for your resignation, or even ask how you reconcile it with your conscience to co-operate in measures opposed to your own opinions. If you profit by the generous fiction, it is recognised that you are not animated by a selfish motive, or have a thought for anything beyond the honour of the English name and interests of the British Empire. Nobody would suggest that you love Office for its own sake. Obviously, you would much rather be troutng or playing tennis.

It is, perhaps, the chief defect in your public character that you appear to possess no personal ambition. Indeed, if the truth be told, you have no consuming hunger for hard work. Had you been placed in any Department except one in which the issues involved are so tremendous that lack of industry would almost amount to treason you would probably have been known as quite a slack Minister. But the easy-going methods of the Granville days have passed away, and, accomplished as is the permanent staff at the Foreign Office, the Secretary of State and his junior colleague have to keep them-

selves continuously braced to a high intellectual tension which occasionally must be irksome to a statesman who like yourself loves the open air, and feels more relish in circumventing the wily trout in a limpid Hampshire chalk stream than in tracking out the dull mendacities of some diplomatic trickster. For the wear-and-tear of platform agitation or Parliamentary wrangling you have neither taste nor talent. If the plain truth must be told, you are not above-the-average clever. Yet from the outset of your public career no doubt was entertained by your friends as to the success awaiting you if only you would give yourself the trouble of seizing it. Even before you had gone into the House of Commons you possessed the manner best appreciated by that ever-changing, ever-constant assembly. It consists in saying the expected thing on the proper occasion and in suitable language. This art, or gift, whichever it may be, is at once the despair and contempt of the ambitious cranks and brilliant failures who abound in Parliament. When you sit down after making a plain statement of British policy it seems as if anybody could have done as well. You have not struck out a new idea or coined a memorable phrase, nor is there, in your record, any reason for supposing that you could have been original if you tried. Yet you have achieved what more showy politicians fail to effect—you have carried the audience with you and disposed of your

critics. They are silenced, exasperated, puzzled. They could go on talking columns and prove you wrong. But they know that nobody would listen to them.

As an instance of Parliamentary adroitness, it may be sufficient to point to your dealings with the Russian Government. It was proposed last year to send a British Fleet for a cruise in the Baltic, where it would naturally pay a visit of ceremony to the German, Scandinavian and Russian ports. Loud was the outcry of sentimental Radicalism, which insisted that the naval courtesy should be withheld from a country where the Ministers of an autocratic ruler were engaged in putting down a popular revolution. We should be taking sides, it was argued, with tyranny and against liberty. So vehemently was the pressure applied that, since Great Britain could not make an invidious distinction against one of three friendly Powers, it was decided at the Admiralty, or upon its behalf, that the whole project must be abandoned. This, of course, was hailed as a great triumph for the *Vive la Douma* agitators, and in due course they planned a similar campaign against the Foreign Office. It had become known that the Secretary of State carrying on the negotiations commenced by Lord Lansdowne was engaged in settling the terms of a Convention with St. Petersburg which would delimit the respective possessions and spheres of influence of the British and

Russian Empires in Asia. The only purpose was to ease the strain of distant invigilation, and perhaps lessen the burden of competitive preparation for a possible war for the possession of India. A friendly understanding between the two Governments would, it was thought, save both peoples from the risk of an exhausting struggle on the remote frontier and should be equally welcome to patriots in either country. But one of the more violent revolutionary groups in Russia acting in close concert with a clique of London Radicals, declared that the diplomatic intercourse must at once be broken off, lest the Czar's Government should be strengthened through its success in making a beneficial treaty. The so-called Friends of Russian Freedom became incessant in their protests, and time after time questions were asked in the House of Commons. On each occasion they were met with a dry official formula, put into the mouth of a discreet deputy, while the Secretary of State quietly persevered in his task, with which Parliament had no constitutional right of interference. It is a sheer encroachment for the House of Commons, or any of its members, to claim a voice in Foreign Office dealings with other Governments, and, if the usurpation were permitted, would make it impossible for British diplomatists to maintain confidential relations with the representatives of another State. You were much too wise to display resentment or dispute an untenable demand. Why

waste words and temper when you could accomplish your object by saying nothing and going on with your work ? Not until last week, when it was known that the business had practically been disposed of, did you casually remark, on the Foreign Office vote, that the forthcoming agreement had no bearing on the internal affairs of Russia.

Though you are generally popular in the House in whose debates you seldom take part, it must not be supposed that you have escaped making enemies. The cautious policy which you are pursuing is detested by emotional politicians, who would drag us into war with Turkey on behalf of Greek and Bulgarian brigands in Macedonia—much too busily engaged in slitting each others' throats to trouble about the Sultan's oppression—or pick a quarrel with the allied people of Belgium because King Leopold winks at cruelty and extortion in the Congo Free State. Equally are you banned by the Socialists, because, so long as you remain at the Foreign Office, the Prime Minister is prevented from giving effect to his visions of cosmopolitan fraternity. If we may judge by results, you are the only Liberal Imperialist within the Cabinet who has the power of keeping that elderly-featherhead on the tracks. Mr. Asquith, for all his airs of sturdy independence, has been caught in the snare, and his embarrassed struggles in the double part of rigid economist and melting enthusiast, provide sinister amusement for

the students of political human nature. Mr. Haldane, once a pillar of clear thinking and political rectitude, has bemused himself in an unintelligible scheme of army reorganisation, and no longer counts. The others never did count. The Foreign Secretary alone has held his ground, and with cold persistence develops the Rosebery tradition in an anti-Rosebery Administration. If only you could be thrown over, imagine the whoop of emancipated malediction with which some of your colleagues—whom it might be impolite to name—would rush to their country platforms and denounce the crimes and blunders of British Imperialism. By this time, if any other Liberal had been at the Foreign Office, we should have named the day for marching out of Egypt and shaken the very foundations of our rule in India.

Though you have spoken, as in duty bound, of the concord reigning in the counsels of the Government, you must have a good deal to put up with—almost as much, perhaps, as when, during the South African War, a movement was started for drumming you and Mr. Asquith out of the party. Then, as now, you were unaggressive in asserting your patriotism : then, as now, you were indifferent to clamour and impervious to menace. You had shown the stuff you were made of when in your present department you served under Lord Rosebery. It would be unfair to deprive your volatile Chief of the credit which he earned in Mr. Gladstone's last and weakest Adminis-

tration, by his prompt and courageous vindication of British authority in Egypt. But it may reasonably be conjectured that his will was stiffened, not only by the advice of Lord Cromer, but also by the cool judgments of his Under-Secretary. A few years later, when a still more formidable test was applied to British statesmanship, you came forward, and, on behalf of the Opposition, made it plain that the Unionist Government might reckon upon National support if in defence of British interests it should have to face the prospect of war with a Great Power. Distinguished services of this kind are not easily forgotten in England, and, retiring as your life has been, you then made for yourself a position which the most reckless of the Radicals are unwilling to assail. You are a valuable party asset, and must not be sacrificed to a fit of splenetic philanthropy. It is characteristic of your judgment that you show yourself unconcerned in matters not relating to foreign policy, and even in your own department agree to immaterial concessions. Because you felt assured that nothing would come of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's flighty scheme of progressive disarmament you did not protest against bringing ridicule on Great Britain by putting forward in its name a resolution which most of the Powers represented at The Hague treat as a harmless exhibition of English hypocrisy, while the rest think it is a mean dodge for taking them at a dis-

advantage. If you were a cynic (which you are not), you might laugh in your sleeve at the vapid demonstration of international amity—the dull farce in which you have to play Young Lover to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as Heavy Father.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

FRIAR JOHN.

The Right Hon. Sir EDWARD GREY, Bart., M.P.







LORD CARRINGTON

## THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (LORD CARRINGTON)

MY LORD,

Though you are getting on in years, and at sixty-four might be supposed to have reached the age of discretion, you are not yet reckoned among the serious politicians. The general estimate is explained less by your youthful appearance than by the levity of your utterances. Nothing is so hard to live down as a reputation for facetiousness. An ungrateful world laughs at the little jokes and decides that the maker does not count. You enliven debates in the House of Lords with welcome merriment, air London jests, not much the worse for wear, on country platforms, and are quite inimitable at a National Liberal Club banquet. Honest cits and earnest organisers are entranced with your affability, and speak of you—amongst themselves—by your Christian name, affectionately abbreviated. Indeed your spontaneous geniality and sincere kindness constitute your chief asset as a public person. It is perhaps your special function to soften the asperities of provincial Radicalism and to convince touchy doctrinaires or disappointed social aspirants that Peers may be good fellows. This, of course, is not

the view which you take of your mission. If we may judge by some recent speeches you have acquired a fancy for playing the big drum. The performances have not been successful.

There was something comical—too comical to give offence—when you lectured Lord Milner, the other day, on Imperial patriotism, and solemnly announced that you had “done with him.” The wonder is that so sensible and shrewd a man of the world as undoubtedly you are should not have realised the absurdity of measuring swords with an administrator whose name, for good or evil, will endure in the records of the British Empire. It was open to you or to any ephemeral politician to criticise what you think have been his faults or blunders, but to pretend that you have flattened out the Proconsul and left him prostrate argues a certain deficiency in the art of self-measurement. It cannot be suggested that you will take rank amongst Imperial Statesmen, though you have some acquaintance with Britain over-seas. In your courtier days, when you were one of the pleasantest young men of your generation, you were selected to accompany the King, then Prince of Wales, in his famous tour through India. There, as everywhere else, you made hosts of friends. But perhaps the best work of your useful, if not oppressively righteous career, was done when you were sent out in 1885 to be Governor of New South Wales. At that time the prevailing tone

of Australian statesmen was one of mingled contempt and dislike for Downing Street and all that it signified. They were apt to visit their disgust for the Colonial Office on the Governors. Some of these unfortunate officials were second-rate politicians who, having failed at home, must be provided for abroad, while others were starched pedants quite incapable of sympathising with the unconventional and occasionally overbearing gentlemen who swayed the local Parliaments. Without apparent effort you won all hearts in Sydney, and, though part of the credit was due to the exceptionally charming lady who shared your dictatorship, you were long remembered as the best representative of the Crown who had ever been sent to Australia. The popularity that you gained and kept became a standard to which your successors were expected to conform. Nor can it be doubted that your five years in Sydney did something to turn the swelling tide of Colonial disaffection.

This great success in self-acclimatisation was the more creditable as you had gone through just that kind of training which is most likely to intensify the traditional failings of the typical upper-class Englishman. Eton and Trinity, Cambridge, followed by the Guards, do not in themselves make for the ready understanding of a democratic community. Our young cadets are unsurpassed in managing the peoples of an inferior civilisation, because there they

are not confronted with claims of equality. But they are apt to stand on their dignity or relapse into superciliousness when they find English methods and British institutions criticised as antiquated survivals in an effete old country. In your breezy style and good-humoured cordiality the Australians of all classes recognised an appreciative spirit, and they repaid your generous hospitalities by saying you were a Lord of the right sort.

The same qualities have won you the affection of the worthy middle-class folks with whom you are brought into association at such places as the National Liberal Club. Happily you passed through a public school and University without acquiring the culture which makes shy men awkward and reserved ones fastidious. It is, no doubt, a form of intellectual snobbishness, and, as every kind of self-consciousness is alien to your nature, you would probably have shaken off any taint of academical exclusiveness. You have been preserved from that temptation by a rigorous and life-long abstinence from the pleasures of the intellect. Therefore it does not trouble you to meet on equal terms men of a different class. You are too fine a gentleman to think of your rank, while in point of thought and knowledge there would be no excuse of condescension. Your career is an illustration of the superfluity of the Higher Education. The way to the Cabinet is open to any plausible, good-humoured, clever man if he happens

to be a Liberal Peer. Since Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule policy drove five-sixths of our hereditary legislators over to the Conservatives, office and honours have been cheaply won among the faithful remnant.

It would be unjust to hint that your adherence to the Liberal faith was brought about by ambition. You have always been a thoroughgoing party man, and would no more dream of deserting your leader than of disobeying the M.F.H. in the hunting field. Indeed you follow politics in the spirit of a good sportsman—your own side, right or wrong—and never concern your head about the unpleasant things that may be said by the men playing on the other side. You would be just as loyal, though perhaps you might be less energetic, if your services had not been recognised in 1892 by appointment as Lord Chamberlain, and last year as President of the Board of Agriculture. When Mr. Gladstone was your Chief you stood by him as afterwards by Lord Rosebery and now by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Dependable men like you are the salt of Party Government, and, though the superfine philosopher may scorn the illogical system, it has produced the soundest Constitution in the world, and worked it without a serious hitch for more than two hundred years. The mugwumps did not make England.

It was because, on the whole, the Progressives in London were identical with the Liberals that you solicited the vote of West St. Pancras and became a

County Councillor. You lost no time in distinguishing yourself by vehemence of language and equability of temper. At one time you were unjustly depreciated as being a pale copy of Lord Rosebery, and scandalised Moderates looked on you as a sort of cheery Gracchus. Really you meant no harm, and very soon found your level in an assembly where Radical talent was more plentiful than in the House of Lords. It was an interesting but unimportant episode of a facile career. But it stood you in good stead, because it earned you warm friendship in the Radical group which looks askant on the noble placemen who absorb so many of the good things that should be reserved for tribunes of the plebs. Nobody grudged you your promotion to the Cabinet. Even the Labour members, who sniffed at Lord Crewe, a far more capable man, acquiesced in your selection as the head of the Department which was to direct the campaign against private property in land.

No such wild project has entered your mind. You accept the professions of your official Chief at their face value, and believe that you are committed to nothing more serious than an extension of Allotments and Small Holdings. It would be impossible to overpraise the care and skill with which you have developed the *petite culture* on your own estates. With characteristic modesty you have spoken of your "twopenny-halfpenny" efforts in this direc-



tion. As a matter of fact everybody who has followed your experiments knows that the success is largely due to the kindly interest shown by the landlord and the expert supervision which he has instituted. If all owners were equally competent, generous and industrious, the peasant-farmer might be kept on his legs against the fickle climate and treacherous markets of the average English county. It is quite possible also that the practical experience acquired on your own properties will enable you to achieve similar results though on a far grander scale from the Crown lands placed under your administration. If the Cabinet were seriously determined to promote the agricultural innovation which they are advocating, instead of getting up a cry against the landlords because as a class they are Conservatives, they would place ample funds and sufficient machinery at your disposal and invite you to work out a grand demonstration of their agrarian theory. Instead of this you are taken away from departmental duties in order to justify the random speeches delivered by the Prime Minister. It was a happy example of your frankness when you were put up to explain a set of official papers which had been deliberately cooked in order to justify his allegation that the landowning class, from selfish motives, had set themselves against allotments and small holdings. The document was mercilessly analysed by Lord Lansdowne, and on you fell the unenviable

task of making some reply. Promptly you disarmed criticism by admitting the charge. The memorandum assailed as misleading was, you said, intended only to give one side of the case ! Its purpose was to substantiate Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's statement. You had done your best, you added, and were not in the least ashamed of it.

The admission—which happily exemplified your attitude towards politics as a game—tickled the Olympian sense of humour indulged by the Peers. So far from being keen partisans they are apt to look down with genial disdain on “ politicians struggling for existence on provincial platforms.” Having got your audience into good humour, you edged away from uncomfortable statistics and about the Prime Minister's misrepresentations said as little as possible. You related a pleasing anecdote of a friend named “ Bob,” whose pretty wife liked to play the Lady Bountiful on his estate. Agricultural depression had set in and labourers were being discharged. She was told by their wives that they would be content if they could each have a bit of land. But the agent was a sour man and would not be “ squared.” He could do nothing, he said, for a couple of years, and that was too long to wait. So the pretty lady went to her husband and asked him to get rid of that impediment to her plans. But “ Bob ” was funny in some things and said “ No.” The story would, perhaps, have been more useful if it had been

continued. The curious inquirer might, perhaps, have wished to learn why the wicked agent, who should have been dismissed without notice, interposed the two years' delay. It is just conceivable that all the land suitable for small holdings had been let to tenants who would not give up their farms even to oblige Lady Bountiful. But nobody wanted to spoil your little story, or in any other way take you seriously.

Besides, you are recognised by your brother Peers, in spite of intemperate platform flourishes, as a sound man of business. Last year, for instance, when Ministers had taken over Mr. Agar Robartes's Land Tenure Bill, by your advice it was largely remodelled by committee in the Commons, and the process completed under your supervision by the Lords. The result was that a pretentious measure of confiscation was turned into a comparatively harmless Act of Parliament. Probably it will remain almost otiose since the tenant who has reasonable skill and some money at the bank is, as you know, master of the situation and can obtain his own terms without resort to the irritating and expensive remedy known as official arbitration. It is hoped, therefore, that you will display similar moderation when you have to deal with the Allotments and Small Holdings Bill. At present Mr. Harcourt, as becomes an hereditary democrat, scorns the suggestion of compromise with the Opposition. But you are well aware that some

of the more obnoxious clauses were only inserted for the sake of blooding the Socialists, and that, unless Ministers see an unexpectedly good opening for a quarrel with the House of Lords, they will accept the counsel which, as a practical agriculturist, you are bound to offer. One thing is quite certain. You will not urge on the Prime Minister towards the destruction of an assembly to which you owe your political existence. You sat, it is true, for a few years in the House of Commons, but the country would hardly know your name except for the happy accident which gives you an artificial prominence. On neither side, however, of either House is there any man who resents the disproportion between your attainments and position. It is illogical, it may even be immoral, but Englishmen have a liking for the politician who in all circumstances can be trusted to toe the Party line.

I am, my Lord,

Your obedient Servant,

FRIAR JOHN.

The Rt. Hon. the EARL CARRINGTON, K.G.





MR. JOHN BURNS

## MR. JOHN BURNS

SIR,

As a self-made man, you are pardonably conscious of the debt owed by the nation to the author of your eminence, though, perhaps, you exaggerate the public sense of obligation. Never before, so one might gather from your speech and bearing, has so humane an understanding, so inflexible a will, so unspotted an integrity, been placed at the service of the State. It is not surprising that some of the wind from the *popularis aura* has penetrated a really sound and useful headpiece. Ever since you were invited by the Prime Minister to join his Cabinet you have been abominably flattered. Not by people of your own class—they stand by the privilege of old friends and discuss your shortcomings with refreshing candour. The adulation has been conducted by the Tadpoles and Tapers of the Liberal party, who thought that in you they had secured a rising asset, as well as by more ingenuous politicians who are captivated by your breezy self-reliance, and fancy, when they draw you out, that they are communing with the heart of the people. Naturally, it was delightful, and just a little upsetting, for a stump orator to be set up as the Oracle of Democracy. But

the business has been spoiled by over-advertisement. The more profound was the deference paid to our working-man Minister the more savage was the resentment of his unplaced brethren. They do not, or will not, see that where he has succeeded and they have failed there has existed a good reason for the preference. You possess qualities which they lack and may despise.

Other Labour members have read quite as many improving books, and with equal confidence can cite their neat little tags from Ruskin and Carlyle and Herbert Spencer. Culture is going cheap just now at Socialist conferences, and eloquence is as plentiful as strawberries in July. Even honesty is to be got for quite a few pounds a week. These admirable qualities will not by themselves raise a demagogue to the Cabinet. You have beaten your rivals because you know how to preserve the necessary air of rugged independence while all the time you are compromising with the need of the hour and the convenience of the Government. On the Trade Disputes Bill, for instance, in the shape which was first proposed to the House of Commons by the Attorney-General, you had obviously given way to objections urged by the so-called Moderate Liberals. You did not resign on the ground that the Government were in the first instance offering terms to the Trade Unionist party which you knew it would not accept. By retaining office, of course, you made yourself an



accomplice in what was called a betrayal of the Labour cause. But you sat tight and bided your time, while the Moderate Liberals went forth to their undoing. The novice in Cabinet intrigue saw his way to euchre the experts, and enjoyed the satisfaction of watching Mr. Haldane, who would ne'er consent, yielding with gusto to the forced embrace of Socialism, and Mr. Asquith, stout guardian of personal liberty, eating his professions by the spoonful. You are, no doubt, too good-humoured a man to have exulted in the humiliation display. Besides, one never knows when one's own turn may be coming.

It is undeniable that the tact with which you maintained your somewhat ambiguous position gave deep umbrage to the Labour party, which you were expected to keep in tow for the Government. In that group there are enthusiasts who have sworn to give you a fall. Meantime, in the language of the people, you have been "getting back some of your own." When the first rumours were circulated about Socialist extravagance in certain scenes of philanthropic adventure not a hundred miles from Whitehall, you were duly shocked and scandalised. As a good Democrat, you were convinced, no doubt, that these tales had been fabricated by enemies of the People. You commissioned your inspectors to hold a searching examination, in order that your late associates might be exonerated from obviously

malignant suspicion. It is easy to imagine your pain and sorrow on discovering that these allegations were true in substance and in fact, that esteemed comrades were involved in the charge of vicarious *largesse*, and that it was your official duty, as President of the Local Government Board, to show them up. That trial you sustained with exemplary fortitude, but your exhibition of Roman virtue did not endear you to the forward spirits of the fraternity.

Your detestation of other people's humbug has got you into trouble in regard to the so-called Unemployed. There is in the House of Commons a clique of working-men censors who had promised themselves this session the pleasure of calling you to account on the Vote for your department. You smiled at the threat, for you knew that the discussion was going to be burked in the general scramble of a closed Supply. Nevertheless, your critics are waiting for you outside. The time will come before long when you must fight for your life. Whether on the whole you stand to win or lose by the virulence of your enemies remains to be seen. If you care for the praise of persons who resist your policy and detest your aims, you may like to hear that your full-mouthed denunciation of imposture, alike in the seeking and the giving of public relief, rings true to ears not favourably predisposed by a study of your career. It is but fair to add that your condemnation of the frauds practised on flabby politicians and

raw philanthropists is not a front bench conversion. Long before you were thought of as a future Minister, when even in your own secret communings you had hardly measured yourself for a Court suit, you scoffed at the sturdy beggars who go about asking for employment and thanking God they do not get it. Nor have you scrupled to lecture the genuine working man on the besetting faults of his class. If there were less betting and drinking and idling in good times, there would be less talk about distress, you have said, as soon as trade begins to be slack. Nor have you confined yourself to preaching. In the days, now distant, when you laboured with your hands, you were distinguished for skill and industry, and could always be trusted to do a good day's work in return for a good day's wages. Employers who disliked your oratorical performances, and were dubious about your influence amongst their men, had no fault to find with you as an artisan. Even when you emerged from a retirement caused by a misplaced enthusiasm for the right of public meeting, you had no difficulty in getting a job and keeping it.

It is often alleged, both by your friends and enemies, that you are not at heart a Socialist, and people talk as though you were a Conservative force within the Cabinet. Where they find the evidence of this alleged moderation does not appear. Thirty-two years ago you stood as a Socialist for Notting-

ham, and since 1892 you have represented Battersea on the strength of the Radical-Progressive-Socialist vote. At this last General Election your address covered the extreme propaganda, and included the abolition of all hereditary authorities. You have never spoken or written a word which suggests that you have recanted any of the principles avowed when you thundered crude philosophy on Clapham Common or figured in the riots at Trafalgar Square. So far as your opinions go you are the same man who led the great strike at the London Docks, and competed in the game of clap-trap with Salvation Generals and Sensation Cardinals. It is possible, of course, that you may disagree with some of the quack remedies proposed by such men as Mr. Keir Hardie, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, or Mr. Snowden ; but many years will pass before we come to the end of the subversive and predatory schemes which you are prepared to sanction. If we are to wait until your scruples come into action, the State will have advanced a long way towards the Socialist ideal. It is but doing you justice to confess that you are strenuous in advocating a policy of philanthropic subversal. The opposition and intriguing against you spring from no imperfection in your creed, but simply from jealousy of your personal success. Ingenious historians delight in tracking out the tortuous manœuvres of Whigs or Tories, and a scandalised posterity is invited to hold up its hands in horror at the

sordid motives which influence the great families that ruled England until the Reform Act gave supremacy to the virtuous middle class—only to be ousted in the next generation by the yet more effulgent purity of the enfranchised artisans and labourers. For a time, indeed, the successive leaps in the dark of 1832, 1867 and 1885 were justified in the result. Jobbery was checked, nepotism was disguised, and bribery was rendered at once perilous and inordinately expensive. Whatever other charges may hereafter be brought against the Gladstone-Disraeli period of public life in England, it cannot be called an age of corruption or self-seeking. The dual system was so rigidly worked that no individual could push his own fortunes except by doing service to his own party. Now we seem to stand at the opening of a new era: the historic Liberal party is breaking up and the loosely united factions are little better than personal cliques. There is now as much plotting and counterplotting in Radical and Socialist circles as there was in the House of Commons when Sir Robert Walpole dispensed his bribes with good-natured cynicism. A dead set has been made against you simply because, amongst the forty or fifty working men representatives, you have won the grand prize.

You are, no doubt, well able to take care of yourself and give a good account of your rivals. For you know how to get the ear of Parliament and have

impressed a distinct image of yourself on the public mind. Really, you are a clever, resourceful, opportunist tactician, but wisely are content to be known as Honest John Burns. The air of unpremeditated candour is well kept up by the genuine impetuosity of your language. Partly through intelligent reading of good English literature, partly through a natural turn for rhetoric, you have become a good orator of the second class. It is, perhaps, hardly a defect that, like most self-educated persons, you delight in swelling phrases, and seldom use a simple word when your vocabulary contains a long one. This is the approved style of Hyde Park and the Trade Union Congress. When you are engaged in controversy your statements are as rotund as your figure of speech. In your campaign on behalf of the London Progressives you did not hesitate to reproduce the bold flight of imagination by which the County Council's Tramways are alleged to be paying a dividend of sixteen per cent. Perhaps you are astonished at your moderation in not claiming sixty. It would be unfair to examine too precisely the argument which you employed in behalf of your associates in London administration. You owe much to the London County Council, and the London County Council owes much to you—or that section of it which for eighteen years was predominant at Spring Gardens. Of the tramways, the steamboats, the works department, and all other adventures in

municipal trading you were a vigorous and hard-hitting defender. On the whole, it is, perhaps, fortunate that you were so closely connected with extravagance in Local Government. The best game-keeper, it is said, is a reformed poacher. You went to Whitehall well versed in all the tricks and manners which it has become your official function to circumvent and control.

It is only natural that an ambitious man, conscious of genuine talent and crediting himself with greater capacity than he possesses, should be anxious not to associate himself with failure. Without being an exceptionally discerning person or blessed with a specially enlarged bump of caution, you are able to see what is under your nose. A very slight study of figures, with some kindly prompting from the trained officials at the Local Government Board, showed you that the promise given by the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer in regard to a universal system of old age pensions could not be carried into effect. Either with or without the privity of those tardily repentant statesmen you published the other day a set of tables obviously framed with the purpose of enabling them to climb gently down from their insolvent eminence. Great was the indignation of the Independent Labour party when it became known that you were on the side of discrimination amongst State annuitants. A resolution was forthwith passed which was

nothing but an oblique vote of censure of yourself. Already you had fallen out of favour by your exposure of the farm colony foolishness and by keeping a sharp eye on the expenditure under the Unemployed Workmen Act. You are, it is to be feared, a lost soul, nor will your comrades shrink from pronouncing the words of condemnation.

Your future is assured so long as Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman controls the Liberal party. On most questions, if not all, you see eye to eye with him. Of the two, possibly, he is the better Socialist, and you the better Liberal. But neither of you is troubled with an inconvenient rigidity. Another bond of sympathy between you is your common love of resounding platitudes and popular applause. With his advantage in the way of wealth and education you would have cut a far more considerable figure than he is likely to achieve, while, if he had been born in your station of life, he would have made a passable Labour leader. Still on the right side of fifty, you may have a distinguished career in front of you, for you have by no means used up your powers of self-instruction, and, for all your platform truculence, you are not overbearing in Parliament, and in private intercourse with members of the House are unaffectedly genial. If some of the Labour people look askance at you, they cannot fairly accuse you of assuming airs of social superiority. The inflation which you occasionally



exhibit is purely intellectual, and it is quite untrue to say that you are compelled to use a shoe-horn when you put on your bowler hat. For you have the saving gift of humour, which helps to carry off your dreary commonplaces, urged with the air of an original inventor, and redeems your bearing from the worst errors of a Cleon trying to be Pericles.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

FRIAR JOHN.

Rt. Hon. JOHN BURNS, M.P.

## FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (MR. L. HARCOURT)

SIR,

You are one of Fortune's favourites and deserve all she bestows. For you never miss a chance or take an unfair advantage. After a few months' experience of the House of Commons you were lifted, smiling, over the heads of the party veterans, and nobody except the disappointed placemen found fault with your rapid advancement. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, not in other respects a Heaven-sent Minister, is a shrewd judge of character, and in the son of his old colleague and rival discerned a rising man who would be useful to him. Already you have more than fulfilled his most sanguine expectations. Nobody could more deftly have handled the Plural Voting Bill which was entrusted to your charge last year in the House of Commons. A more impudent scheme of electoral gerrymandering had never been propounded in the name of Reform, and, awkwardly introduced, it would have revealed its unfairness even to Liberal partisans. It was a bold experiment to consign its fortunes to a parliamentary novice. But you glozed over its worst features, and delivered a

pleasing and humorous essay which put your audience into an amiable mood. The first impression was decidedly not unfavourable, and even now there are bull-headed Radicals who honestly cannot understand why the Bill was hotly contested in the House of Commons and finally rejected by the Lords. Throughout the discussions, which at times became stormy, you preserved an air of sweet reasonableness that did infinite credit to your command of facial expression. Yet all the time you never agreed to any concession worthy of being considered by the Opposition. Of course, you knew all along that the measure would not be accepted. But you were not working for legislation. What you aimed at was to bring the Peers into public disgrace for throwing out what you represented as a modest instalment of a much-needed reform. Of course it was a hopeless policy, since eventually the true character of the Bill was sure to be exposed. But your business was to act upon instructions, not to originate strategy, and your part was performed to admiration.

The same genial suppleness has this session been called into play on behalf of the Small Holdings and Allotments Bill. Unfortunately, however, you were not left quite at liberty to set the note. The Prime Minister and some of his more obtrusive satellites had indulged in such grandiloquence about their plans for restoring the peasantry of England to the soil, and for exterminating the squires, parsons and

other noxious vermin of the countryside, that, as a faithful colleague, you were compelled to infuse an acid flavour into your speeches. Nothing would more keenly disappoint Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman than the opportunity of carrying a measure which had been so modified as to preserve the interests of landowners and meet the views of practical agriculturists. To throw it over might expose him to odium amongst people who are anxious for a genuine extension of the small holdings system, while to accept it would exasperate the fussy gentlemen who are talking at large about an agrarian revolution. Your efforts in Committee, therefore, have been directed towards averting the peril of a compromise, and you were forced to meet fair offers with a disobliging and overbearing attitude. The position is essentially false, for nobody who has set eyes on you or heard you speak in public can figure you in the character of a firebrand. It is not suggested that your new-found zeal in the cause of the agricultural labourer has been feigned for party objects. Probably you have read up your brief in a sympathetic spirit, and are sincerely convinced that the shortest way to reform village life in England is to break up the existing system, and place the landlord and clergyman under the heel of ale-house politicians. But though you are the happy possessor of a beautiful country seat, and can divert yourself agreeably with some of the sports beloved by people of your

own class, you are, and will always remain a typical man about town—smart, quick-witted, urbane. You are at home in Berkeley Square or Westminster. Much as you love your home at Nuneham, you are a stranger in the country.

There was, indeed, but one reason for selecting you to pilot the Government attack on the landed gentry through the House of Commons: of the available Ministers, you alone possessed the requisite tact and power of assimilating a plausible show of information. Before the Third Reading you may have picked up quite a respectable amount of information, for you are a “quick-study”—besides speaking your words with a quiet air of conviction. Nevertheless, this Land Bill is not your job. There is something rather absurd in the contrast presented by your superfine appearance and delicate way of living with the sentiments which you have to enounce. You are no more fit to represent a Jack Cade agitation than would Mr. Joseph Arch be to receive your friends in Mayfair. It is true that a rising politician who means to go far—as you mean—cannot pick and choose his work. He must do what he is asked or he will soon be dispensed with. But when you have seen this measure through—whatever may be its fate—you will have the right to protest against more of the Government’s dirty work being put upon you. Like Mr. Birrell, you may imperil your reputation if you are saddled with further

failures, and one day might find yourself ranked along with the stale party hacks for whom you cherish a secret but supreme disdain.

It must not be imagined, because you are genial in bearing and scrupulously polite to all manner of men, that you hold a modest opinion of your talents and claims. You are a true son of your father, but in social relations you began where he left off. To those of us who knew Sir William Harcourt in his latter days, when his old-fashioned courtesy charmed even those who declined to be amused by his wit, or interested in the display of his lightly handled knowledge, it was difficult to believe that in youth and middle age, though he had a few attached friends, he was one of the most cordially disliked men in public life. As years advanced he mellowed and ripened. In spite of his unconcealed anger and disappointment at being supplanted by a statesman whose infirmity of purpose he despised and whose showy gifts he estimated at a very moderate figure, he allowed the kindness of his heart to appear in his manner, and in society which did not bore him (he would tolerate no other) he was universally beloved. You have modelled yourself on his latter manner, and, as reward for your cleverness in this respect, are generally acclaimed as one of the coming men of the Liberal party. If Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was quick to recognise your merits you lost no time in taking the measure of his foot. There is not one of

his colleagues, young or old, to whose opinion he pays more deference, and your recent promotion to the Cabinet was but an official recognition of the place you hold within the confidential circles of the Government. If the driving power is supplied by Mr. Winston Churchill, the lubricating fluid comes from Berkeley Square, and it is an anomaly resented by the holders of more distinguished posts that the two politicians who especially have the ear of the Prime Minister are the Under-Secretary for the Colonies and the First Commissioner of Works.

Yet it is natural that he should turn away from the starched pedants and pushing *roturiers* about him to the young aristocrats whom he credits with the possession of ideas. In Mr. Winston Churchill he believes that he has discovered an inspired demagogue who knows how to get up steam for a popular movement. With more reason, he looks to you as a skilled interpreter of public opinion. For this task you gave yourself a special training when you acted as secretary of the Home Counties Liberal Federation. You are, indeed, an artist in political organisation, and the result of your labours is seen in the present Radical hold upon what is, perhaps, the most Conservative region in the civilised world. The rough-and-ready methods of the conventional party agents, which are well enough in their way, you left other men to work out. But you devoted yourself with singular skill to the dissemination of opinion.

In short, while the political hacks consider they have discharged their duty if they bring up their man to the poll, you think a great deal more about making him ready to come of his own accord. Indeed, if this were ancient Athens, and you were Socrates, a good indictment might be drawn against you for corrupting the mind of the rising generation.

It is not easy to imagine that a man of fastidious refinement, not unconscious of Plantagenet ancestry and delighting in what is humorous, can stand in close sympathy with the puffing and blundering and grotesquely serious middle-class politicians whom it is your business to keep in tow. But your character would be misunderstood if you were reputed to be insincere in Liberalism. Your principles you inherited from your father—his latest set of principles—and, clever man as you are, you are never in the least likely to start thinking on your own account. With those principles you took over, as a legacy, some of his prejudices. If you have consciously assigned yourself a mission in public life, it is to prevent your neighbour on the other side of the square from re-asserting his old influence in the party. You maintain, and when the time comes are ready to prove, that Sir William Harcourt was badly treated when the succession to Mr. Gladstone's place was given to Lord Rosebery. Nor will you have any difficulty in making out a plausible case for your theory that the disaster which fell upon the Liberal party in 1895



was largely due to the inefficient leadership of a graceful but wayward amateur. It is one of the pleasures which you are holding in store for yourself to vindicate your father's reputation, and, incidentally, to tear away the few rags of credit still hanging to his rival's woebegone figure. A vindictive man you are not, but you have strong family affections, and you intend to put the Harcourts right in public opinion. Meantime you devote your considerable talents in domestic diplomacy to suppressing any tendency within the party to a revival of Imperialism. This is why you have co-operated so heartily with the Prime Minister, and the success of your joint efforts has been quite remarkable. It began with the desertion of Lord Rosebery by his most important associates when Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was forming the Cabinet. How steadily the work of sapping the Liberal League has been carried on may be seen by the successive capitulations of Mr. Asquith—first to the Independent Labour party over the Trade Disputes Bill, then to the Nationalists over Home Rule, and finally on old age pensions. There can be no doubt that the Little England element within the Cabinet is supreme; the Imperialists have been bridled and saddled for their masters. That they are being ridden with a fairly light hand, and are permitted to flatter themselves by pretending to be free agents, is largely due to your dexterous management.

Admiration of the skill and persistence with which the game is being played must not make us overlook the perilous character of the sport. Here are you, by nature and training, a Whig aristocrat, yet working for the elimination of every moderate element within the Liberal party. The fact that you and your closer associates exercise some control over the extreme men, and induce them to veil or postpone their extravagant and subversive plans, only shows that you understand the reality of the public danger. You are overrating your powers if you hope always to hold them in check. The subtlest of party managers may suddenly find himself dispensed with. You will see yourself one day outbidden by some vulgar but equally astute demagogue, and driven to make your choice between retiring from the competition or taking part in a Dutch auction. Despite your generous and unfeigned sympathy with the cause of advancing democracy, it is impossible to conceive you as sympathising with either social reconstruction or political revolution. Yet you are doing the work of Socialism and Republicanism as surely as though you wore a red bonnet and marched the streets behind a black banner. It may seem a little absurd to connect the smiling, urbane and reasonable gentleman, the owner of great possessions, and the host of Sovereigns, with far-reaching designs for the destruction of established institutions. But throughout history it is the pliable and short-sighted aristo-

crats, the men with keen vision for what is near their feet, but blind to the middle distance, who have brought the worst mischief on States. Your abilities lie, as the Prime Minister knows, in the manipulation of recalcitrant or hesitating colleagues, and nobody imagines that if the pinch came you would dare to withstand a turbulent mob leader. Not being an especially unscrupulous politician or more than normally ambitious, you may some day discover that the Radical-Socialist group have approached a point where you must part company with them. We may be sure that the valediction would be delivered with all possible grace, and you would pleasantly deprecate the explosion of the bomb which you are engaged in manufacturing.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

FRIAR JOHN.

Rt. Hon. LEWIS HARCOURT, M.P.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION  
(MR. McKENNA)

SIR,

Amongst the various suggestions put forward to account for your appointment as Cabinet Minister, the correct explanation was at first not forthcoming. Now, however, there is a pretty general agreement as to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's purpose. He favours every kind of political innovation, and on this occasion was resolved to break away from the invidious old tradition that promotion should turn on merit. In choosing you to succeed Mr. Birrell at the Board of Education, he flattered himself that he had selected the most unfit person in the House of Commons. The Prime Minister is a sound judge of men, and you lost no time in justifying his patronage. Your indiscretions have been almost as glaring as your lack of scruple. Hardly had you been installed in office when you began to flourish about the great things you meant to accomplish, and referred to the work of your gifted and conscientious predecessor with a singularly indecent air of condescension. A left-hand compliment was paid to his conciliatory methods and parliamentary eloquence, but the in-

ference was conveyed that he had proved himself but an inefficient weakling. Now at last the strong man has come. Whitehall was to be put in order, and the Church of England called to a stern reckoning ! So inflated were you with a sense of new dignity that you forthwith gave away the scheme which Ministers intend to propose next year. In the future, if they have their way with Parliament, it will be impossible for any denomination to secure the teaching of its doctrines in a public elementary school, even though it is prepared to defray all the extra cost that may be incurred. In the new Bill there are to be no " facilities " for special religious instruction. We are, therefore, to assume that the Cowper-Temple rule will be made universal except for children whose parents take refuge in the Conscience Clause and object to any kind of devotional lesson. That is to say, the rates and taxes paid by all citizens alike will be spent upon a system repudiated by everybody but Nonconformists and Secularists.

How little you must know of the English people if you think they will submit to such tyranny ! How little of Parliament if you hope to get such a Bill passed into law ! Apparently it is an *idée fixe* in your mind. Only the other day you returned to it in even stronger language than before. Talking to your Monmouthshire constituents, you told them that the measure you were preparing would make the Lords regret that they had not accepted Mr.

Birrell's Bill ! The Government had gone to them with a peace offering, and they had refused it ! The next time Ministers would go with a sword ! Let us hope that your prophecy may be more accurate than your history. But there is no need to correct your misrepresentations. Perhaps they served your purpose with the political Dissenters to whom you were paying court. Nor is it worth while to comment on the unctuous parody of Biblical language. What possesses more interest is the gratuitous folly of the avowal. Everybody in Parliament knew, of course, that the Bill promised for next year is not intended to be passed. Purposely it is being so framed that the Peers must throw it out, and their act in rejecting it is to be made a special count in the general indictment. It is in this way that the House of Lords will be tempted to "fill up its cup." The strategy is crude, not to say infantile. But such chance as it has of imposing on ignorant electors depends on Ministers keeping up the pretence that their proposals are moderate and reasonable. Who could blame the Peers for resenting an open defiance ? The surest way of enlisting popular sympathy with them is to show that the Government are trying to pick a quarrel and drive them into a corner.

As you are obviously, rather too obviously, bent upon making a career for yourself, there must have been an intelligible reason for what looks very like a vulgar stupidity. Perhaps the truth is that, like

some bad cricketers, you are playing, not for your side, but for your personal score. What you are chiefly thinking about is, how to ingratiate yourself with the Radicals, and, in particular, with the party managers. They believe that "Down with the House of Lords" will be the best battle-cry for the next general election, and you want to convince them that you are a moving spirit in the Forward group. From that point of view it is easy to understand your recent outbursts. The educational policy which you are supposed to represent is to be sacrificed—or rather utilised as a stone to tie round the neck of the dog that you wish to drown. Perhaps it is because there is no chance of passing your great measure that you are trying to show the political Nonconformists another kind of sport. They are determined to taste the blood of Church schools, and, as you cannot gratify them through legislation, you are resorting like some Russian bureaucrat to administrative decree. The Act of 1870 forbids the employment of parliamentary grants in building elementary schools, and, since you are unable to upset that section of Mr. Forster's law, you mean to circumvent it by a Vote in Supply, recorded by a complaisant majority in the Commons. The schools which you are to set up will draw upon the unlimited resources of the unhappy ratepayers, and, by lavish expenditure, draw the denominational institutions into a ruinous competition. In the same

arbitrary spirit you have issued codes and regulations which will destroy the religious teaching in the training colleges and secondary schools built and partly maintained by the Anglican and Roman Churches. It is a shabby and oppressive trick, nor was its character disguised by the dry, pragmatic style in which you defended your conduct in Parliament. Possibly you do not understand the depth of the resentment you have aroused or the strength of the forces you are defying.

A few days ago, when the House of Commons was dealing in Committee with Mr. Asquith's Finance Bill, you blurted out a remark which at once startled the Ministerialists, and revealed the limits of your intelligence. Without any sort of justification, you suddenly announced that in your opinion the whole revenue of the United Kingdom should be raised from Income-tax and Death duties. A patronising apologist on your own side remarked that your utterance showed the mischief of Ministers making speeches without preparation. It is true enough that your conduct of the discussion during the absence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer excited the derision of your party, and it has been openly intimated that Mr. Asquith's work should have been delegated to a subordinate but less incapable member of the Government. But it cannot be pleaded in excuse that you spoke without knowledge of your subject, since you have served your



fiscal apprenticeship as Financial Secretary to the Treasury. It is impossible for a man to hold that important office, a recognised training for statesmen with a future, without realising the significance of your proposal. But again, you had a personal object ; you were playing to an extremist gallery. As before you had sought to curry favour with the Radicals, so now you were paying court to the Socialists. Should they, at some future time, require the services of a Finance Minister who would penalise all forms of property, they would know where to find him ! In justice, it must be confessed that the tactics which you have recently been pursuing are probably welcome to the Prime Minister. Step by step, since he came into power, he has been engaged in proving that he takes no account of the Moderate Liberals in the Cabinet. Any action which brings them into contempt passes without rebuke, and may, perhaps, be rewarded with private commendation. For that kind of work you are an almost ideal subordinate, and, so long as he remains dispenser of the loaves and fishes, you may depend upon getting your portion.

There is, of course, another theory of your conduct. It is more flattering to your character than your judgment. The suggestion is that you are endowed with an impetuous and overbearing spirit, and occasionally let yourself go without premeditation. Undoubtedly, your tone in Parliament gives some warrant to the theory, and it is certain that

your rapid promotion has upset your moral balance. Sitting on the same bench as distinguished men like Mr. Morley, Mr. Haldane, Mr. Asquith and Mr. Birrell, you fancy that you rank with them in point of intellect, and are disposed to address lesser mortals in the language which a university oarsman thinks appropriate when he is coaching a college crew from his horse on the towing path. You are preparing a great fall for yourself if you forget that you are anything more than a hack politician. It has been your good fortune to win favour in the eyes of the Prime Minister, who discerned your calibre with the un-failing gift of a mediocrity in search of its like. Hereafter it may happen that the Leadership of the Liberal party will revert to some man of intellect, who will restore the policy of looking out for talent. As for your overtures to the Socialists, they will come to nothing, since in their own group they have plenty of men with views as extravagant as those you profess, and mental furniture far more imposing than you can boast.

So far as the public know, the quality which raised you to the front bench is the one you proved when you rowed for Cambridge, and won prizes at Henley. You are a first-rate fighting man, and that is a characteristic which Englishmen are apt to respect. Lord Carrington has held you up to popular admiration as an example of his theory that this is a Cabinet of sportsmen. But are you a good sportsman, and do

you always fight fair? It was not altogether a gracious episode when the leaders of the defeated Liberal party, coming back to the House of Commons after the General Election of 1900, delivered an organised attack upon the Chamberlain family, and attempted to show that they were unfitted, by the nature of their private investments, for offices of public trust. You joined with gusto in the hunt, and the only excuse is that men of light and leading, such as Mr. Haldane, decorously stimulated the vulgar exhibition of political spite. When the scandalous scene was brought to an end, the Liberals realised that they owed no gratitude to the men who had degraded the House of Commons by their virulent personalities. This is not the sort of controversy that befits an historic Parliament. It would be considered low and mean in a parish squabble. But you seem to have thought it was good business, since four years later you repeated your tactics. In 1904 you attempted to discredit Mr. Austen Chamberlain, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by insinuating that the extra duty imposed on stripped tobacco had been instigated by the Tariff Commission, and that one of its members had been placed in a position to derive profit from early and illegitimate information as to the contents of the Budget. The charge scandalised so robust a Free Trader as Lord Hugh Cecil, who repudiated the accusation though he condemned the impost which you professed to be criticising.

Pressed to define your accusation, you neither substantiated nor withdrew it—protested that you had made no insinuation. You did not suggest, you kindly said, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had any complicity in the sudden and remarkable increase of the imports of stripped tobacco at the turn of the financial year. The question, you said, was whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been made a dupe !

Until the other day this was the first occasion on which you had succeeded in rendering yourself a prominent personage in public life ; but you seem to have learned nothing from the general reprobation which followed an unworthy manœuvre. Happily you are still a young man, as politicians go, and, if you mend your too evident faults of temper, there is nothing to prevent you, with strict application to business, from winning an assured place among the second-rate placemen of the Liberal party, and eventually, perhaps, obtaining promotion to the House which at present you are engaged in denouncing.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

FRIAR JOHN.

Right Hon. REGINALD McKENNA, M.P.

## OUR GENTLEMANLY FAILURES

*Fortnightly Review*, March, 1897

“To hear some people talk, they would almost suppose that athletics were a kind of parasitic growth upon modern educational institutions. He did not take that view, and he never had taken that view. . . . While patience, sobriety, courage, temper, discipline, subordination, were virtues necessary for the highest excellence either at cricket or football, there was a higher point of need. No doubt a University existed largely to foster that disinterested love of knowledge which was one of the highest of all gifts, and to give that professional training which was an absolute necessity in any modern civilized community. But he did not think the duties of a modern University ended there. A University gave a man all through his life the sense that he belonged to a great community in which he spent his youth, which, indeed, he had left, but to which he still belonged. . . . That feeling might be fostered—was fostered, no doubt—by a community of education, by attending the same lectures, by passing the same examinations, but no influence fostered it more surely and more effectually than that feeling of common life which the modern athletic sports, as they had been developed in modern places of learning, gave to all those who took an interest in such matters, whether as performers or as spectators.”—*Mr. Balfour, at Edinburgh.*

“Aspiring young Englishmen should think a little less of

athletics, and more of acquiring knowledge such as would make them distinguished citizens.”—*Mr. H. M. Stanley, in Lambeth.*

THE conflicting, if not contradictory, counsels given by two men who have succeeded in life are placed at the head of this article because they will, perhaps, serve to draw attention to the view it puts forward. It is not a novelty, only a discarded idea which now seems due for revival—a protest against the pleasant cant involved in the phrase *mens sana in corpore sano*. We need not inquire whether Mr. Balfour would have published his *Defence of Philosophic Doubt* at the age of thirty-one, and led the House of Commons in his forty-fourth year, if he had made a playtime of his youth, or whether Mr. Stanley does not owe part of his African honours to a frame inured to privation and endurance. But politics and exploring are fancy trades, and offer no criterion for the humdrum callings by which most of us have to thrive, starve, or scrape up a bare subsistence. Still, the divergence in the two texts is not without significance. Each preacher spoke of life as he has found it. Mr. Balfour had his career made smooth from the start: he might turn out, according as he used or wasted his chances, either a brilliant success or a graceful failure, but he could not come absolutely to grief. Mr. Stanley, on the other hand, had to push and drag himself into notice, or eat his heart out in the obscurity that is so galling to a man conscious of

great gifts spoiling for want of opportunity. The one had no obstacle to overcome save an ingratiating diffidence: the other had to force his way, through poverty and ignorance, either to acknowledged triumph or solitary chagrin. The one perhaps could afford to loiter on the road, trifle with the amenities of a full life, and develop every side of a versatile nature: the other had to be pressing forward all the time. For young men situated as Mr. Balfour was the precepts he delivered at Edinburgh may, perhaps, be as sound as they certainly are attractive. Those whose position more nearly resembles Mr. Stanley's will find him a more trustworthy guide—even if they start with greater advantages in point of birth and education. In any walk of life they may enter they will meet thousands of rivals equally well equipped, and, though the *Art of Getting On* does not contain the *Whole Duty of Man*, it is a chapter which has to be studied.

Forty, even thirty, years ago the young man who had passed through his Public School with a tolerable record was reasonably sure of a decent berth if he went into commerce, or after taking a fair degree at the University would probably find a modest opening in one of the professions. There was a steady market for his respectable attainments. The number of muscular young Christians turned out on the world every year from the Public Schools was strictly limited—a few hundreds per annum. Now there are many

thousands of them. The beginning of the glut is due to Dr. Arnold, whose famous work at Rugby was quickly imitated by a score of organizing headmasters, who either transformed the languishing Grammar Schools of country towns into great establishments with several hundred pupils apiece, or invested proprietary enterprises with a corporate and quasi-public character. This process has been carried on by another generation of teachers, and at the present time it would be difficult to point to an English county which does not possess half a dozen institutions where the instruction and general training are substantially identical with those administered at "Our Colleges of Eton and Winchester," as mentioned in the Prayer Book.

Before Dr. Arnold's day, and for some time afterwards, these privileges had been almost restricted to the sons of parents who belonged by birth to the upper or upper middle class, or had struggled up to that rank. Now the middle class receives a Public School education, and we have a generation of young gentlemen out of all numerical proportion to the general increase of our population. Grown and growing up, we see them everywhere: bright-eyed, clean-limbed, high-minded, ready for anything, and fit for nothing—unemployed or wearing out their best years in third-rate situations. Walk along Cheapside, and every third young fellow you meet in a silk hat you may recognise as bred upon the Arnold tradition—



trained, as part of his nature, to tell the truth and keep his nails clean. Excellent habits, both of them; but not essentials of success in the City of London. If you see one of them swinging along with his muscular stride, his fresh unwrinkled face, and his spotless high collar, you know he is only cheerful because he has been sent out on an errand, and forgets for the moment that he is the drudge of some puffy Israelite, has to call him sir, and perhaps answer his bell—an estimable and not unkindly person, perhaps, nor without a certain weakness for the manly young clerk who is so little use in the office, and despises him, he feels, because he never took a cold bath in his life, and does not know which way to sit in a boat or which side to mount a horse.

The time was, it has been said, when a demand existed for the Public School type. It had its value in the City when it was less common. There were some houses which liked to have a show partner or a personable representative—he inspired their more fastidious clients with confidence. But that day has gone by, or all but gone, and a salary now is nicely adjusted to the service a man can render his firm and the business he can introduce. The ordinary merchant is no longer impressed with an athletic record. He does not ask whether the candidate for a stool in his office is the same redoubtable youngster, with the left-hand twist from the off, who took five wickets at Lord's last summer, kicked the odd goal

for the Old Muggletonians in the final round for the Cup, or electrified the University of Oxford by stroking the Skimmery Torpid head of the River. Now and again, it is true, real eminence in games may come in usefully. There is a genuine *camaraderie* amongst athletes. Old-fashioned investors may still be found who like paying their commissions to a broker whose name has been honoured in *The Field* ; here and there, perhaps, a solicitor is so saturated with the traditions of his boyhood that he will carry a brief to the chambers of a distinguished cricketer in Lincoln's Inn, just for the pleasure of making his acquaintance and showing him off afterwards at a dinner party of jolly old buffers like himself. But the normal dispenser of legal patronage entertains a prejudice in favour of counsel who have found time to pick up a little law ; and the average Bull, Bear, or Stag fights shy of the high-class firm who stand out for the regulation  $\frac{1}{8}$  per cent. He goes to that business-like Mr. Jacobs, who will accept  $\frac{1}{16}$ , and deserts him in turn when he hears of a still more enterprising Mr. Levy, just set up, who will take  $\frac{1}{32}$ . The prestige of the Tom Brown type has passed away, now that so much of the most important business has come under the control of foreign or half-foreign magnates, who neither admire nor understand what is an essentially, one-might add an aggressively, British product.

It is easy to quote numerous instances of indi-

viduals like Lords Justices Smith and Chitty, Sir Richard Webster and Sir Robert Reid, who have combined physical prowess in their young days with striking success at the Bar. One may cite certain strenuous families, such as the Selwyns, Wordsworths and Lytteltons, in which this double stream of energy descends as a sort of birthright. And there are junior examples of the same fortunate type—but not many. The competition for eminence, the struggle for a bare livelihood, has become too exacting and exhausting, even in professions which, like the Church and the Law, impose least strain on their younger members. From a fairly wide acquaintance among contemporaries—men between thirty and forty years of age—who have respectively succeeded or failed in making their mark, the writer is inclined to regard the disappointed ones as almost, though not quite, identical with those who gave the best of their young time to athletics, and treated lessons and lectures as “a kind of parasitic growth upon modern educational institutions.” Among the few happy exceptions to that classification there is not one who, on taking to work, did not give up play. A few there have been who attempted to maintain the double part; but those who did not abandon the idea at once either learned wisdom in time, or broke down in their health.

But if a lad has “done his lessons,” if an undergraduate attends his lectures and “reads his books,”

how can he spend his spare time more healthily than in some outdoor sport ? Well, the answer is simple enough. He will leave his School or College knowing just the same things as all his fellows—a little more than most of them or, as the case may be, a little less. It does not make much difference. He will only be but one more reproduction of a normal pattern—a pattern which has largely gone out of use. The regulation curriculum—perhaps as good as any inelastic system—includes a certain number of subjects (classics, English and mathematics, with a smattering of modern languages and science, mixed according to taste and capacity) which, for all practical purposes, are common property. There is not one of these attainments which fetches a price in the open market if it be only of average quality. There is not one which does not command a purchaser, of some or other kind, if it is in any way out of the common. The young man who can do some particular thing better than anybody else in his own circle of competitors need never go begging for a patron. But you cannot get a quotation for all-round average merit. Lament it as we may, we must acknowledge the fact that the future is for one-sided men, those who have made the most of their special gift, or, if they are endowed with several, have ruthlessly concentrated themselves upon one. Now it is just this particularisation, this possibly lopsided development which is checked if the learning years are

spent, and the after life is moulded, on the old-fashioned training—the almost equal division between mental and bodily education. Its demands on the time and energy of those who undergo it are so exacting that no chance is left for a man to differentiate himself from his likes. He has no reason to show why he should be chosen in preference to anybody else who is similarly furnished inside and outside. It is the experience of most men who have worked their way upwards without special interest or exceptional opportunities that the long-awaited chance of distinction has come through an almost casual aptitude for some position, for some undertaking, a little out of the ordinary run. And it is painfully common to hear one of our meritorious failures lamenting that he has lost “such a capital opening” just because he did not know, or had forgotten, some “potty little thing” that nobody could ever have thought would be of any use. It is the stray fragment of botany, perhaps, or chemistry, the sudden flash of a geographical or legal reminiscence, which makes a man valuable in an emergency; which suggests a lucrative enterprise or gives him the advantage in a technical controversy over an opponent who knows everything else as well as he does—except the one little thing that happens to matter. This is the sort of “luck” that does not occur to the man who has learned just what other men know, even if he has learned it a trifle

better than most of them. In the strenuous hackneyed occupations of a Liberal Education there is little opportunity for picking up the extra bits of knowledge which may lead to fame or fortune. The routine games and sports are at least as absorbing as the routine tasks; the ordinary young man has no time to think, no time to observe. He is hurried from work to play, from play back to work. The system, it should be explained, has not grown up accidentally. It is pursued of set purpose—it keeps the boys out of mischief. It acts as a sort of automotor sanction of morality. Nor can its efficacy or the importance of its results be called into question. But we must count the cost.

“God never wastes his candle-ends,” Mr. Spurgeon said, or is reported to have said. Whatever he meant by that audacious metaphor, it may be applied to the present argument—that modern fortunes are made out of by-products, and made by those who have the eye to discover them, by the men who either were never cramped by routine or have broken loose from the restraint. The virtues which Mr. Balfour praises as the results of excellence in physical pursuits (patience, sobriety, courage, temper, discipline, subordination) make an imposing list for the moral expert, though one might remark that they are all very much of the same type. But if cricket and football really have such results on the character, then they have a good deal to answer for.

They are all virtues which have their corresponding faults—faults that are obviously hostile to alertness of mind and personal initiative. The qualities held up for our admiration in the Perfect Athlete are such as would rather console a good man in adversity than help an ambitious one to make a start for success. There is no need, however, to press that point. The worst drawback is that athletics consume the whole leisure of their votary, and prevent him from ever “being by himself,” making the acquaintance of his own mind, and discovering that he is, perchance, endowed with powers, or haunted by aspirations, which are not exactly the same as those of all the other good fellows with whom he is living in a daily whirl of unreflecting activity. Every night he goes to bed ready for the vacuous wholesome sleep that will not be broken until it is time to begin another round of task work and regulation play. It is cheerfully gone through because it is pleasant in itself, because he is trained to all the virtues Mr. Balfour enumerates, and because it is “just the same as the other fellows are doing.” There is no disturbing or inspiring sense of a Something Wanting, no feeling about for a Self that has got itself in the hum and bustle of a corporate existence. The aim is rather to conform to the recognised standard, to live up to the highest mark of the established *éthos*, to win as many prizes in the examinations and as many caps and ribbons in the playing-fields as possible, to excel one’s

companions, if one can, but only on their own lines. And so the days and the months go by—*pereunt et imputantur* ! Before leisure has been found for thinking, for discovering one's own nature, the learning years are lost, and it is time to go out in the world and make a living—only to discover that the qualities which won so much respect in the little society of School and College life have no value outside it, and that the work of self-preparation has to be begun again—unless a vigorous youth, accustomed to praise and more or less facile success, is content to drop into some subordinate post without any reasonable prospects of promotion. The sensible ones soon realise the situation, put away childish things, and emancipate themselves by degrees from the self-indulgent traditions of an antiquated system. The others, the majority—they are our Gentlemanly Failures. They are too proud, too honourable to become mere pensioners on their families, so they accept the first berth that promises a bare living, and endure it in the hope that something better will turn up.

What their idea of "something better" is may be guessed from the fact that, when the Colonial Office announced the other day that a hundred vacancies were to be filled up in a South African police force, twelve times as many applications were sent in—by young men of unexceptionable birth and first-class education, who despaired, not without reason, of



getting anything in England that would suit them as well. The pay is trifling, the position is nothing, but the work is mainly in the open air, and the qualities required are just those developed by athletic sports—temper, patience, courage, sobriety, discipline, etc. etc. What, however, must be the feelings of the father of a successful candidate, when he reflects that he has spent at least a couple of thousand pounds on his son's education only to make a policeman of him? More than once the War Office has declined to enrol a regiment of Gentlemen Cadets. There are certain obvious, though not perhaps insuperable, objections to such a course. But there would be no difficulty in enlisting the men. In three months it would be easy to raise, not one or two, but twenty or thirty, such regiments, which would make the basis of such an Army Corps as the world has never seen, whether for hard fighting or the patient endurance of hardships—men who would take to discipline as kindly as to cricket, and to whom the honour of the regiment would be as dear as was the credit of their school—as chivalrous a company as ever was sent to be food for cannons. But what a waste of educated manhood!

Even in the field the merely physical qualities developed by athletic games and sports are of little use. The troopers who rode into the Transvaal with Dr. Jameson and Sir John Willoughby were as pretty a set of men as any officer could wish to command. Nor is there any doubt that if they had been decently

led they would have achieved their immediate object. It is perhaps as well that they failed. But the fault did not lie with the rank-and-file, or even with the junior officers. The ignominious affair at Krugersdorp was no disgrace to English pluck or endurance, but simply one more proof that modern warfare is a game which should only be played by those who have studied the rules, that you might as well try to give a violin recital by the light of nature as to invade a hostile territory without some rudimentary acquaintance with the principles of strategy and tactics. Hunting, no doubt, has helped to the making of brilliant leaders of cavalry. But they are not sportsmen of the "cut-me-down captain" class. It is not hard riding and bold jumping that train a man for the greater game of war; but that "eye for the country"—so rare in the hunting-field—which enables him to "guess what the enemy is doing on the other side of a hill."

It is the same in every walk of life. In the Army, officers who go through their drills and garrison duties with just the indispensable amount of efficiency, and then hurry off to their polo matches and steeple-chases; colonists who have walked a Highland gillie off his legs, or ridden in the first flight in the shires, but have no idea how to mend their boots or shoe their horses; barristers who take up a patent case without even a smattering of chemistry or mechanics; actors with a pretty turn

for sentimental elocution who cannot hold a foil or send their voices to the dress-circle ; clergymen who get a sore throat after three services on a Sunday, or find themselves cornered by the local shoemaker on a point of Christian evidence ; young men in the City fit for nothing but adding up rows of figures and running messages about the streets ; journalists who want to write leading articles without understanding the rules of the House of Commons—these are but a few examples of the Gentlemanly Failures whom we meet at every turn.

The question would not be so serious if young men were left to themselves. They might be trusted, those who have sense, to find out their mistake in time, and to keep under control the physical energy which, in the sophisticated conditions of modern civilisation, is almost as dangerous to success in life as sheer mental indolence. But they are positively encouraged in their pleasures by leaders of public opinion. At every academical function it has become a platform common-place for the distinguished person who makes the speech of the day to snub the successful candidates and inform them that there is something higher than mere proficiency in their studies. So, no doubt, there is ; but it does not lie in the pursuits of the rivals whom they have beaten in the class-room. It is not the purpose of the writer to depreciate outdoor sports or any other form of amusement. It is well for everybody to take as much

enjoyment as he can afford to pay for—whether in money or in time. But the taste is natural, almost universal amongst Englishmen, and does not require artificial cultivation.<sup>1</sup> What is the good of one class of advisers warning us that our commercial supremacy is slipping away from us, that we must fight our hardest to retain the neutral markets of the world, that we are being gradually supplanted by more enterprising and self-adapting rivals, if another sect of preachers go about expounding a more agreeable gospel, and insist on the merit of getting all the fun we can out of life? The national need is all for longer hours and closer application, while the popu-

<sup>1</sup> Since this article was in type, a part of its argument has been anticipated by Mr. Bryce. He was urging his hearers to observe and reason on the facts of mercantile and industrial life. "The thoughts of English boys and young men," he said, "were now so largely absorbed by athletic sports. He did not wish to disparage those sports, nor undervalue the physical training they gave. They contributed largely not only to the health, but to the high spirits and cheery dashing ways of young Englishmen. But the inevitable consequence of the complete absorption of the interests of young men in these amusements was that they neither enlarged their minds by study after leaving school, nor troubled themselves to reflect upon and comprehend anything beyond their daily business routine. In business, as in everything else, brains and pains will win in the long run, and our young men who take life easily, and give all their spare hours and thoughts to football, or cricket, or cycling—much as we may sympathise with these exercises—will find themselves distanced in business by the painstaking, hardworking, systematic, thrifty German, whose thoughts are bent steadily upon the main purpose of his life."

lar cry is for short hours, more holidays, and plenty of recreation. In many parts of the country, in occupations that permit the artisan to do his work in his own time, very little is done between Friday night and Tuesday morning. The middle class have not yet risen to that apolaustic ideal—they cannot afford to take a solid slice from the week. That is reserved for the “worker.” But they are progressing in that direction—on their bicycles.

The worst of the tendency which is so unfortunately fostered by many public men who wish to say something pleasant is that it has come to be generally accounted a merit. The man who drinks too much wine or whisky, who consorts with fascinating frailties, who backs horses or plays cards for stakes beyond his means, is well aware all the time that he is making a fool of himself, and is quite resolved to pull himself up before he goes too far. Generally he is in time. He gets a sharp warning before long ; if he does not take it, so much the worse for him. But it is no great matter, since, in that case, he belongs to the limited class who are predestined for the crows. Very different is the case of the athletic trifler. He believes all the time that he is doing the best thing by himself. His appetite, his ruddy complexion, and his cheery spirits make him a pleasant companion for himself as well as for his friends. “What a shame it is,” they say, “that such a bright, pleasant fellow should not get a better chance.” And they are in-

dignant because that "pasty-faced little Jones," who cannot handle a racket or say two words to a lady at dinner, has been promoted over his head. Mr. Jones, no doubt, was a "sap" at School and a "smug" at College, but now he is giving the go-by to the fine young fellows who thought they did him quite an honour if they tossed him a careless nod when they passed him in the Quad. And, thirty years hence, it will perhaps be this Mr. Jones, when they have departed this life, who will head the subscription to save their widows from destitution. For he still keeps a tender place in his heart for the bright, popular lads who treated him almost as an equal in the old days when he crept about the corridors half ashamed of his own existence, and, in a deferential sort of way, carried off all the prizes, as if they were matters of no consequence.

Perhaps this jeremiad would not be called for, this warning would be unjustified, if the mischief ended where it arises, if the athletic vogue were dropped as soon as life is begun in earnest. Cricket, football, running, and rowing, are distractions which, in most cases, work their own cure. The ordinary young man with his way to make in the world very soon discovers that he has neither time nor money for playing three-day matches. Football, the cinder-path and the river, except in a desultory way, involve an amount of training and self-denial that are not compatible with the ordinary duties and amusements of town

life. Not many men carry them on after their twenty-fifth year, and if they have devoted too much of their previous career to such preoccupations the harm is not yet irreparable. They have given themselves a bad start in life, but if they have the true athletic mettle in them they may be able—unless, as sometimes happens, their general energy has been impaired by premature strain rather than developed by normal exercise—to recover the lost ground. And, in any case, the evil would not be widely spread. To excel in such sports is not given to many, and there is no temptation, once the stimulus of school or college life is escaped, to go on with pastimes in which one cuts an indifferent figure. It is not unmixed bliss to field out the best part of a day for the sake of spending a couple of anxious minutes before the wicket, or to row one's heart into one's mouth to a running accompaniment of critical ob- jurations from the coach on the towing-path. It is the introduction of easier pastimes which is wasting so much time that ought to be spent, if not at the desk, at least in taking stock of oneself, in associating with other minds, and bringing out one's own latent powers. Lawn-tennis, golf, cycling—these are amusements which anybody can learn with very little trouble, and soon comes to enjoy, to look for as a daily need. It is true that real excellence in these pursuits may be as hard to attain as in any of the old-established sports, but one may become a passable

performer, just as one may learn to sit a reasonable horse, or to bring down a fairly confiding partridge, without any great call on the virtues of patience, sobriety, courage, etc. etc. "Failure is to form habits," said Mr. Pater. They make a man into an automaton, with no more volition or initiative than the wheel or crank of a machine. His day gets parcelled out into sacred sections, which must on no account be broken into. The barrister (or his clerk) who has acquired the craving for a spin on his bicycle every afternoon at five o'clock is just as much the slave of habit as the self-indulgent colleague whom he despises for not being able to get on without a brandy-and-soda or a glass of bitter at eleven o'clock. One man is playing havoc with his stomach, the other with his future. He may manage to "finish up" his day's task before he starts for his outing, but the value of work done under such pressure is not very great. It may pass muster, but it does not gain credit. It is just the stuff turned out by a pot-boiling, bread-winning mechanic; it lacks the ideas and intelligence of an effective ambition. There is but one kind of assets with which all men are equally endowed—every one has twenty-four hours in his day. If he allots two, three, or four to his racket, his clubs, or his wheel, he is deliberately choosing to run with the weights against him, and must not complain when he is beaten by rank outsiders. Nor is the case much improved if he confines



his pleasuring to his "week ends." It is just the leisure time between Saturday afternoon and Monday morning which should inspire the ideas that may raise him above the common ruck. Once again, it may be well to say that this is not meant as a protest against holiday-making, whether athletic or social, but only against the regular habit of tearing about between work and play and filling up every hour of the day and week with self-imposed engagements. There is a great deal of talk about German competition, but nobody who has employed German clerks would say they were by nature more clever and trustworthy than young Englishmen. The reason why they so often get the better posts in houses of business is that they have no other interest than the one they live by. Their musical meetings, their beer drinkings, their little debaucheries are detached episodes, forgotten as soon as they are finished, not part of their lives, whereas the open-air amusements of their English colleagues are very often rather more than *dimidium animæ*.

There are many strong reasons—none of them discreditable—why the worship of the body, or of bodily prowess, should have grown to its present dimensions. The English aristocracy—whom Matthew Arnold playfully called Barbarians—have always held the first place in the world for feats of strength, skill, and courage; and it was but natural, when the middle class were at last admitted to a

similar teaching, that they should also enter into athletic emulation;<sup>1</sup> that the Eton and Harrow match should lead to a similar contest between Rugby and Marlborough, and this in turn to an annual fixture between the glorified grammar schools of Slopington and Torpington, the cricket in the last case being very often quite as good as in the two others. Once the rivalry is started it is not easily controlled. Nor has the head-master of the humbler class of institution any object in keeping down the sporting enthusiasm of his pupils and junior colleagues. It is good for the moral tone of the school, no doubt, since it keeps the boys out of mischief and leaves the masters free, and acts as a sort of automotor discipline. The fact that a couple of Old Slopingtonians are playing for Oxford is quite as good an advertisement for their school as that three or four members of the sixth form have won open scholarships, and it is mentioned on Prize Day with considerably more gusto. The Principal, excellent man, is unable to believe that what is so useful to himself can be anything but advantageous to his old pupils. He allows himself to be patronised by those dignified young dunces when they come down in

<sup>1</sup> An extreme exemplar of the spirit was the veteran cricketer who, on being presented with a son and heir, gave directions that the boy's right arm should be kept strapped to his side. "It would be such a pull for the youngster," he explained, "if he turned out a left-handed bowler."

their glory and make their esteemed suggestions as to the improvement of the school cricket. They point out, perhaps, that some promising young bat is having his prospects seriously impaired by being compelled to waste time in the laboratory or drawing school when he ought to be at the nets in attendance on the Professional. Even at the University the same kind of thing goes on—though not in the same degree. I could name the College and the year when a formal remonstrance was made by some of the leading undergraduates to the Dean because his colleagues had ventured to “plough” a candidate for matriculation who was quite certain to play for the University in his first year.

Some of the more fortunate athletes who have contrived to do just enough reading, and are blessed with sufficient brains, to win colourable honours at the University have, no doubt, a career marked out for them.<sup>1</sup> They will be welcomed back as masters in the old School to assist in the unconscious mischief of manufacturing another generation of disappointments. But even for them the path is not so pleasant as it was fifteen or twenty years ago. The competition of qualified candidates for such vacancies has already reduced the salaries and the chances of promotion, and the Church no longer

<sup>1</sup> A well-known University cricketer, who was playing a fine innings at Lord's, received, while at the wicket, two telegrams from enterprising headmasters offering him appointments.

offers an opening. The increased seriousness which has been introduced into that profession by the steady development of the High Church movement has relegated the duty of playing cricket and football with the young parishioners to the works of supererogation—desirable but not essential qualifications for a cure of souls.

It is not to be hoped, nor need it be feared, that the manly type of young Englishmen, sound in wind and limb and clean in heart, will ever disappear. But it existed amongst us long before the present mania for athletics had set in, and will not become extinct when that craze has passed away. The fashion has spread in the United States, and seems to be gaining some foothold in France. But it should be remembered that the manufactures and internal trade of those two Republics are protected by a wall of prohibitory tariffs, and it is somewhat easier there for the middle-class young man to earn a decent living than in a country of unrestricted competition. But our most formidable adversaries, the Germans, have not yet been fascinated by an ideal which did very well for ancient Greeks, whose wants were simple, and who had no rivals to undersell them in their own markets. It is true that the youths of the Fatherland have to give up two or three years to serve in the Army, where, no doubt, they acquire the virtues of "patience, sobriety, courage, temper, discipline, subordination." But, if all accounts are true, the

period which they spend under the drill-sergeant is not one of ease and pleasure-seeking, and they experience a pleasant relief when they are remitted to civilian labour. The conscription may be a national burden, though Lord Wolseley thinks it a political advantage, but it falls equally on all, whereas the young Englishman who gives up his best years or his best thoughts to athletics is dressing the balance against himself—with the result that he is supplanted by some very inferior person for whom he feels a hearty and, perhaps, excusable contempt. He may be consoled for a time by the smiles and admiration of all the pretty girls he knows, but when it comes to serious love-making he discovers that those engaging innocents do not as a rule choose their husbands from the ranks of Gentlemanly Failures.

## MR. CHESTERTON'S SENSE OF DUTY

*Outlook*, August 17th, 1907

SIR,

In a recent issue of the *Illustrated London News* I see that Mr. G. K. Chesterton has been reading a lecture to "the man who wrote the Note" in your Review on Bishop Gore's views of University Reform. "One might endure Oxford," he remarks, "but not *The Outlook*." His sufferance is pathetic, for, lower down, it appears that his soul is troubled about even weightier matters than the fate of Oxford or the merits of your Review. "Oh! what a happy place England would be to live in if only one did not love it!" Seemingly it is because of the great affection he bears towards England and Oxford that he takes up his pen and slings ink at them. Whom he loves he chestertons. But if England is not good enough for him, and Oxford falls below his mark, *The Outlook* may perhaps put up with his superior airs. He would, no doubt, improve all three institutions if he had the managing of them. But to await the *Utopia* wherein Chestertons are kings and kings are Chestertons might involve delay. Meantime, "the man who wrote the Note" may correct a mistake into which his critic has blundered by mis-

understanding the prelate whom he has taken under his protection. Really, Mr. Chesterton might have been content with the range of his own ignorance.

In the House of Lords the other day the Bishop of Birmingham spoke of Oxford and Cambridge as being too much of playgrounds for the rich. In a sense the statement was correct. Dr. Gore is, as he always was, both at Trinity and Pusey House, a spiritual enthusiast who devotes himself to gaining a moral influence over young men. Of his remarkable success, and of his considerable limitations in that respect, this is not the place to speak. Being, as it were, a sort of cultivated missionary, he set up a high ideal, and would not rest content with anything but the most strenuous performance. But he did not say, or mean to suggest, that the "upper classes regard the University as a lark." Mr. Chesterton is proud of his cockney phrase, since he uses it over and over again. "The lads at Oxford and Cambridge are only larking because England, in the depths of its solemn soul, really wishes them to lark."

Mr. Chesterton should consult some more recent authority on life at Oxford than *The Adventures of Mr. Verdant Green*. He would then learn that by no stretch of democratic language can the undergraduates be described as rich. Nineteen out of twenty will have to work for their livings when they "go down," and nineteen out of twenty work with

quite reasonable diligence when they are "up." They might work a little harder, most of them, without doing themselves harm. But they are, as a rule, more serious than the average young fellows of their own age—the Army, the medical student, the budding solicitor; the ordinary clerk or shop-attendant; or the typical artisan. Moreover, they work without being paid and without being compelled, simply because such are the traditions and genius of the place. If they are sometimes gay or frivolous or foolish or occasionally vicious, they are like other specimens of the race which Mr. Chesterton wishes to elevate. But nobody who knows Oxford or Cambridge—certainly not Dr. Gore—would suggest that they are depraved by the atmosphere of the University. It might be more rarefied, of course, and he has shown what he believes to be the path towards the moral altitudes. It is the belief of most University men that better guides may be found, but none would dispute either his good faith or knowledge. He is not an intellectual contortionist, posing before the ideal and pretending he won't be happy till he gets it.

Both at Oxford and Cambridge there are many young men who have nothing to support them beyond their income from scholarships or exhibitions supplemented, in case of need or merit, from a fund privately raised and administered by their Colleges. In this way they are enabled, on a modest scale, to



take part in the social life of the little communities and enjoy the full benefits of Oxford and Cambridge. They are, of course, much more fortunate than their unattached or semi-attached contemporaries, who, it is to be feared, get little benefit from an ancient university which they could not more cheaply obtain at one of the new foundations where the lectures and demonstrations are at least equally efficient. Here we come to the crux of the question, which persons like Mr. Chesterton do not understand. They wish the young men from the working-classes to share the traditions and inhale the aroma of a certain form of social existence, and yet to remain sons of the people. The thing is impossible, for the simple reason that corporate life—whether it be that of a London club, a trade-union, or a college—involves a certain minimum of expenditure.

You might fill the streets of Oxford and Cambridge with crowds of emulous students, gathering, as in mediæval times, at the lectures of popular professors at the University, but if you could not find room for them in the Colleges they might as well (or better) have gone to London, or Liverpool, or Birmingham. At the two old seats of learning the College is the *Alma Mater*, not the University.

This may be all wrong. In that case, away with Oxford and Cambridge, or leave them alone and found something after your own heart. But if you

attempt to nationalise them by flooding them with mere attendants at lectures and classes, you will only be building a new Oxford and a new Cambridge on the ruins of the Colleges. For young men of sufficient intellect and character, however humble be their origin, there is a cordial welcome in the Colleges and a prosperous career. But the door is not, and cannot be, opened for the sons of artisans or small clerks who intend to follow their fathers' callings. The training and the atmosphere unfit them for the class from which they have sprung. This is iniquitous, say the democratic reformers; the best sons of the people are tempted to desert their class. Precisely. That is just what is being done. But the more amiable and truthful way of stating the case is to say that the Universities fulfil the function of a social ladder, along which aspiring and meritorious lads may rise to the highest place in the State.

Mr. Chesterton is shocked by the suggestion that these excellent young fellows, with their way to make in the world, may be assisted to "rub off some of their angles" by intercourse on equal terms with men of a different class and less strenuous character. This, he says, means "losing their independence." Mr. Chesterton is not the first democrat to confuse independence with uncouthness, honesty with boorishness. "Our angles," he writes, "are simply our shapes." He is appalled by the fear of becoming a "clumsy and indeterminate polygon." May he

stand on guard against the corroding action of literary success, and escape the perils of an enervating rotundity.

I am, Sir,

Yours, etc.,

THE WRITER OF THE NOTE.

*August 14th.*

## A GREAT COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

*Outlook*, November 9th, 1907

IMPORTANT as "Coke of Norfolk" was in his day and county, there was, we think, no need to write his biography in two large volumes. A memoir of about a quarter the length of Mrs. Stirling's work would better have met the wants and wishes of the most intelligent readers. There are solid slabs of matter here which possess no kind of interest or value except for persons connected with the family or neighbourhood over which the "Whig prince" exercised a genial despotism. But it seems useless to preach condensation or the art of literary omission until the golden day arrives when the vendors of books will charge, and the buyers will pay, prices in an inverse ratio to their size. Naturally Mrs. Stirling, as a great-granddaughter of her hero, is incapable of sifting the relevant from the immaterial. Throughout she is animated with whole-hearted admiration for the first Earl of Leicester (of Holkham), and assumes the same enthusiasm in her readers. Her redundancy is the more unfortunate because she is gifted with a quite exceptional power of narration, and presents her characters as living beings. For the judicious skim-

mer there is in these handsomely illustrated volumes a rich store of entertainment, a large amount of new historical information, and a vivid picture of upper-class life in England from the middle of the eighteenth century well past the accession of Queen Victoria.

In politics Coke of Norfolk was an uninteresting Whig, chiefly rendered piquant by the violence of his inherited prejudice and the rancour with which he expressed his opinions. When first elected as Knight of the Shire he told the freeholders that he was a "Whig of the old school, a lover of the principles of the Revolution of 1688," and by that line of conduct, his course would be governed. It was as much his duty, he held, to hate the Tories as to fear God and help man. In strict accordance with these traditions he entertained sympathy with the American colonists in their rebellion, felt a certain tenderness for Napoleon, loathed the younger Pitt, and denounced the opponents of the Reform Bill as tyrants and corrupters. His tolerance grew with age and adulation. He presented two petitions for Reform to the House of Commons, which he charged in direct terms with corruption and "all its base and mischievous appendages." This was rejected as insolent. The second, we are told, was sufficiently vehement, but "presented nothing so unequivocally insolent, and was permitted to lie on the table." But he met his match when Cobbett appeared at Norwich,

scoffed at Reform as a remedy for hunger, and broke up the assemblage of ardent politicians intent on hearing their great neighbour from Holkham. "Here," Cobbett yelled, "is immediate relief for you! Here is Reform indeed! This will fill your bellies! This will prevent your beds from being taken under you." In Parliament, as a rule, Coke did not trouble to observe the ordinary decencies of debate, but his most outrageous exploit with his tongue was committed at a public dinner held at Lynn to celebrate his election in 1830, when he was a man seventy-four years of age. The toast had been proposed of "The father of the new King—the memory of George III." Coke refused to drink it, and pointing to a portrait of the late sovereign, declared that he was the "worst man who ever sat on a throne, that bloody king." Now we hold no brief for the honour of George III, and only mention the incident, which the biographer seems to think quite creditable to her subject, as illustrating the truculent side of Coke's character.

But he had the merits of his failings. Devoted as he was to Fox, he spoke out against the coalition with North. Because he disapproved of the Prince Regent's action with regard to Mrs. Fitzherbert, he declined to receive him at Holkham. On his Royal Highness proposing to pay his annual visit, Coke replied that Holkham was "open to strangers on Tuesdays." The Duke of Portland, who had tried to

disarm his opposition with the offer of a peerage, was openly bearded in his own house. "My Lord Duke," said the incorruptible squire, "I have come in person to answer your letter, and to express my astonishment and disgust at your Grace's believing me capable of selling my principles for a peerage; I beg to acquaint you that I will never again set my foot within your doors." This was but one of five occasions on which he declined a similar honour. Why in the end he succumbed is not quite clear. Perhaps the dominating reason in his mind was that he would enjoy a posthumous revenge on Pitt, who had grossly affronted him by offering the Earldom of Leicester—a title to which he thought he had a prescriptive right—in another quarter. Vain, overbearing, spoiled with prosperity, toadied almost from his youth upward, declaiming about liberty and equality yet never brooking opposition, and proud as Lucifer, Coke of Norfolk was the type and embodiment of the old Whig families who had so long ruled England—not less corruptly than the Tories whose malpractices they affected to condemn.

But this was only one aspect of the man's nature—perhaps the least important. He was beloved by all about him, and admired even by those who did not cherish designs on his open-handed generosity. He lived *en prince*, and scrupulously fulfilled all the duties of his position. As a landlord he was liberal, and in agriculture he was a well-known pioneer of

modern methods. His success as an administrator of his great estates gives better proof than his speeches of his very remarkable talents. If he played the patron on a grand scale, he was also a genial companion with his equals. He associated on intimate terms not merely with the Royal Dukes who honoured him by eating and drinking of his best, or with the leading statesmen of his party, but also with artists, scholars, and men of letters. Not the least attractive passages in these volumes are the letters from Samuel Parr, a pedant of high character and some attainments who has to thank his ridiculous egotism for the derision which has fallen on his memory. But he was a good honest soul, if just a trifle sycophantic, and magnanimously confessed that Porson was a better Grecian. Though the two men jangled, and though Porson, whether drunk or sober, never veiled his contempt for the other's understanding, Parr interested himself to get up an annuity for Porson when he had to resign his Fellowship at Trinity, Cambridge, because he could not conscientiously take Orders. Mrs. Stirling tells the story of Parr wishing to display his powers of argument before a large company, and asking Porson what he thought about the introduction of moral and physical evil into the world. A hush fell on the company, and then, in a voice as solemn as Parr's, Porson answered, "Why, Doctor, I think we should have done very well without either."



We must not yield to the temptation of extracting good stories. The book is full of them, and they are given with commendable brevity, but as a rule they relate closely to the context. Perhaps the most attractive feature of Mrs. Stirling's book lies in her sketches of the half-forgotten notabilities of the time—the formidable “Queen Mary” (Lady Mary Coke), the superlatively frail Lady Ellenborough, Amelia Opie, Chantrey, Lord Erskine, the Duke of Sussex (a staunch friend and frequent correspondent of Coke) and Bishop Bathurst of Norwich. The numerous and excellent illustrations bear witness to the singularly handsome face and gallant bearing of the “Whig prince” as well as to the charm and beauty of the ladies of his family. He was a fine shot and a good sportsman. His physical courage was proved by the most crucial of tests; he stood up more than once against a savage mob. If he was absurdly bigoted in his political opinions, he was ahead of his time in not laying pressure on his tenants or dependants to vote with him. His dictatorial manners made him the subject of many lampoons, but on the whole he was popular in his own neighbourhood, and in every respect was a model country gentleman, even if he did drink the health of George Washington every night during the American War. The picture drawn by Mrs. Stirling suggests no flaw in Coke's character, and this inclines us to suspect that the family papers have been edited

with an over-tender discretion. The man presented in these pages could have had little sympathy, politics apart, with Fox, none with the Prince Regent. We know pretty well how these eminent persons spent their days and nights. It was not a scheme of life that would fit in with the Holkham programme as presented by Coke's great-granddaughter. Though we thank her cordially for the two entertaining volumes she has given us, we hope that some further effort may be made to trace the biography written by Thomas Keppel, brother of Coke's second wife. By some mysterious chain of events the manuscript was lost. It might be worth recovery.

## PESSIMI EXEMPLI

*Outlook*, December 26th, 1908

IT would be unfair and misleading to lay the whole blame of the Eight Hours Act for Coal Mines upon the Government. True, it figured in Ministers' programme, is one of the few substantial measures which they have carried this year, and will no doubt be made the subject of platform boasting. But everybody knows they hated it and did their best to kill it. The first idea was to overlay it, after the fashion of mothers dealing with inconvenient offspring. When the Radicals insisted upon an autumn sitting, Ministers at once filled up the dates with their Licensing and Education Bills—not intended to pass, but nicely calculated to smother the Dear Coal scheme. That trick having been defeated by the Lords' curtailment of proceedings over one of the stop-gaps, and Mr. Runciman's collapse over the other, the Cabinet was compelled to redeem its pledge to the Miners' Federation. The Bill should be proceeded with. The Home Secretary was instructed to put his best foot forward, and mark time with every demonstration of eager haste. Poor Mr. Herbert Gladstone was in the position of a man who

has been requested by a person he does not like to propose him to his club. He cannot refuse without giving offence, but at least he can hint to confidential friends that his heart would not be broken if his candidate were blackballed. Not very courageous conduct, nor quite straightforward. But it is a mixed world, my masters.

Mr. Gladstone performed his tortuous task with unexpected judgment. The House of Commons was given a free hand in Committee, for there was just a chance that some amendment might be carried (so easy-going were the Whips) which would incense the Labour Party and give the Government an excuse for saying that the Bill had been spoiled beyond repair. But the studied neglect of Ministerial agents was made good by the Socialist watchdogs, so the Bill which was sent out to be scuttled was piloted into its first port. All was not lost, however, when the Bill had been saved. The Commons had failed, but there was still the House of Lords. Once again, as in the case of the Trade Disputes Bill, Ministers looked wistfully to the Peers. Now it is our opinion that, on the whole, that appeal should have been answered. Either the Eight Hours Bill should have been rejected by the Upper House or radically amended. There is, of course, no obligation on the Peers to undertake scavenging for a Government which would turn round on them afterwards and denounce them for doing dirty work. Again,

there was in the House of Lords quite a considerable number of Peers who were unwilling to destroy a measure recommended upon humanitarian pleas. If not absolutely hypocritical these were unconsciously deceptive arguments; for the coal-miners are not overworked, and if they were, could through their powerful organisation limit their hours of labour by voluntary arrangement with the employers. Still, this misleading invocation of false sentiment prevailed with many of the Peers, as in the past it has in the House of Commons with Unionist politicians who had no votes to gain by accepting proposals that strike at the root of English industrial traditions, and establish a formidable precedent in State Socialism. Something, we confess, the Lords have done to modify the direct mischief of this particular Act by successfully claiming that both the winding-up times shall be excluded from the statutory limitations—practically turning the Bill, it is said, into one for eight and a half instead of eight hours. Their proposal to postpone the date for the Act's coming into full operation was, however, rejected in the Commons and dropped by themselves—*vile damnum*. As we have before maintained, it is only right, if such an experiment should be tried at all, that its effects should be demonstrated while the Ministry which carried it is still in existence, and therefore amenable to public judgment, whether favourable or adverse.

For it is notorious that the Home Secretary's

arguments in favour of procrastination were but sophistical pretexts for evading popular disapproval. The Government wished to get immediate payment in votes from the Miners' Federation while they deferred their own settlement with other wage-earners, and with the small purchasers of coal. It is for the present impossible to form any definite opinion as to the amount of the destined rise in price. Perhaps it will lie about midway between the minimising estimate of Government apologists and the outside figure suggested by the Coal Consumers' League. But that some increase, and a serious one, will take place is undeniable. Indeed, as ordinary householders know, the process has already set in—had set in as soon as the Bill began to be seriously talked about. Already the coal-owners have given notice, not for a reduction of wages, but for cutting down extras and privileges which represent money's worth to the miners. But the full effect of the measure has been partially masked, as the chemists say, by an exceptionally mild winter, which of course diminishes the household consumption.

It is no argument against the probability of a permanent addition to prices that the miners, as a rule, are paid by the amount won, not by the time spent. For of one thing we may be quite sure: the Federation does not intend that the earnings of its members shall be diminished. So insincere a profession would only have been laughed at. Besides, it has been

frankly proclaimed that one purpose of the new Act is to raise the price of coal by arrangement between employers and employed. That would be a justifiable policy if the profits of the one class and the wages of the other were insufficient. In point of fact there has been, so far, no indication that the coal-owners are parties to such a scheme ; but that many of them may eventually be compelled to consider some arrangement of the sort is evident from the fact that several great colliery companies are paying dividends scarcely adequate for an admittedly speculative because highly variable business. Now it is difficult to trace out all the various manners in which a continued advance in coal prices will affect the leading industries of the United Kingdom. Apart from agriculture, there is no first-class industry which is not more or less dependent on cheap power, and as Mr. Bonar Law has repeatedly explained, our supply of coal is the one natural advantage which we at present enjoy against most of our commercial rivals. Throw away their handicaps, and we shall soon be outpaced. Obviously the chief suffering will fall upon the working-classes, who will be hit twice over—first in the fall of wages, and secondly, in the dwindling of employment. It is indeed a dubious boon from the Ministry which, as Mr. Balfour remarked in the House of Commons, affects to be specially solicitous for “ the poorest of the poor.”

But the worst feature of the new Act is not the economic evil, immediate and deferred, which it must bring about. Its true nature and purpose have been obligingly explained by the Labour men. They regard it, quite correctly, as an instalment of State Socialism. With unconcealed contempt they put aside the humanitarian plea—now it has served its turn—that coal-mining is a specially exhausting occupation which requires exceptional treatment. The attempted *distinguo* of Lord St. Aldwyn goes by the board. Why the Labour Party demanded the Bill and rejoice in the Act is their belief that the principle of factory legislation has now been applied to the case of grown men admittedly capable of looking after their own interests and making their own bargains. Neither in Durham and Northumberland, in Scotland and Yorkshire, nor in South Wales, do the miners need State protection. What they asked for and have obtained—what the majority amongst them have asked for and obtained—is the right to impose their will by Statute upon a minority whom they dare not coerce by ordinary trade-unionist methods. Parliament has been called in to do what the Federation shrinks from attempting, for fear of making a schism in the organisation. But this is rank and unredeemed Socialism. It is oppressive to individuals and injurious to the nation.



## LOVE-MAKING BY LETTER

“The Carlyles.” *Outlook*, April 3rd, 1909

IT is very unfortunate that by most of us the love romance of Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle has been read backwards. First we heard about their wedded life, and afterwards of their courtship. How many works of imagination would stand the same test? “They married,” says the judicious novelist, “and lived happily ever after.” Now this, in fact, is what the Carlyles did—notwithstanding the man’s self-reproach, the woman’s complaints, the misleading biography, and the nonsensical controversies it excited. There is abundance of evidence that Froude, quite unwittingly, misrepresented the married relations of the Carlyles. Always reckless in the use of material and caring for little else than to present a vivid picture, he was, as a rule, guided by an intuitive genius, so that the least historically minded writer of his time became one of our best historians. But when he went wrong his blunders were gross. And he went almost as wrong over the Carlyles as over Cæsar. Yet because the sketch was done by a great artist it will stand in men’s memories—or would have stood there if it had not been superseded by this extraordinary

collection of authentic love-letters, arresting, compelling, fascinating.

We have but one criticism to offer on this romance—for as a romance we insist upon treating it. For real life it is too true. A novel though it is, Mr. Alexander Carlyle has made it a novel with a purpose. His object was to vindicate his uncle's memory. Therefore he has felt himself obliged to handle his documents as though they were evidence, and counsel on the other side had demanded that the full text should be read in open court. It may seem churlish to protest, since by itself each letter is interesting. But the text, it must be confessed, is somewhat formidable. Instead of galloping through the book in a single evening of pure delight, we have either to go slowly—fifty or sixty pages at a time—or else we must skip liberally. Had Mr. Alexander Carlyle been free to condense and omit what is irrelevant to the main story he might not, perhaps, have proved his case beyond demur, but he would have given us one of the most charming books in our language. Truth to tell, some of these elaborate literary dissertations from the enamoured philosopher to his quick-witted, elusive, responsive girl-pupil do at times hang fire. They impede the flow of a self-developing tale. Yet never was a solid man of letters less of a pedant than Thomas Carlyle; never was an accomplished and almost learned girl less of a blue-stockings than Jane Welsh. They are for ever matching their wits

against each other, this gifted pair. Nor was the man altogether wrong, altogether misled by the woman's beauty and charm, when he pledged his critical reputation that she was animated by the fire of real genius. For the leisurely reader their interchange of confidences about books, their talk about work, will provide a rich fund of enjoyment.

But the human interest should be supreme. Nothing is more quietly diverting than Carlyle's shy, ungainly, but quite determined approach. This love-making, like many another, began with the lending of books. Step by step the crafty wooer made his ground good, and when he is pulled up sharp for having gone too far, his humble apologies do not disguise his real intention—though perhaps not formulated in his own mind—at the first opportunity to repeat the offence. The man of books knew his way about a woman's heart. Sometimes, no doubt, he suffers agonies for fear that after all he may have lost his prize. One of his letters is dated "Hell."

Indeed, he had some reason to despair. Socially the girl was above him, and even her little fortune was something of an obstacle. But the two natures, except on their intellectual scale, were wide apart. She was fitted to shine in the brightest of good company. She loved such success, and was not above flirting with men of all sorts and conditions. Yet

long before she had confessed her love—even when she definitely wrote that never would she be wife to her friend—her heart had been lost beyond recovery. This was sufficiently obvious to her mother, who at first thoroughly disliked what she considered an undesirable entanglement, and did her best to break through it for her brilliant daughter.

It was the mother's attitude which led Jane Welsh to lecture her lover on his need to win an assured and definite position, to make a good market for his talents, and generally to render himself a presentable *parti*. In spite of the worldly wisdom of the letter in which she refuses to acknowledge a regular engagement, it is all along clear that no consideration of money or position would part her from her beloved genius. She teases him often, bullies him sometimes, but becomes a delicious little Fury when an outsider hints disparagement. Once she has made up her mind that she is really in love, nothing can exceed the tenderness of her language, the generosity of her self-revelation. Clearly she suffers tortures when she has made her avowal that Carlyle was not her first lover. She is desperately afraid that the old affair with Edward Irving may come between her and her happiness. Unbounded is her relief when Carlyle treats the confession with good sense and good humour. Again, she is genuinely angry when, later on, he offers to release her in order that she may make a better match. And what English she writes, this

loving woman—nervous, limpid, never with a straining after literary effect !

The lovers' quarrels and misunderstandings—Carlyle did not enjoy being written to for his good—are perhaps more delightful than their smooth passages. Quite clearly they both foresaw that their life together would have its moments of embitterment. They were much too clever, both of them, to be in constant agreement ; much too strong-willed not to cross each other frequently. Yet, as we have said, they married and lived happily ever after. The one thing that really troubled them, before marriage and after, was that they both had wretched health, and we suspect that they greatly exaggerated their ailments. That is the way of literary and artistic people—of most people with a sensitive organism and a craving for sympathy. Quite an appreciable portion of these letters is devoted to alternate lamentations over illnesses which ordinary persons who go about their common business would not have worried over. These, however, are the only passages which remind us that we are reading about a pair of lovers who are not altogether above our own plane. Wit, pathos, romance, idealism, and sound commonsense are abundantly present in this book of life.

## JOHN STUART MILL IN HIS LETTERS

*Outlook*, May 7th, 1910

THERE is plenty of human interest, for readers who know how to find it, in this collection of forty-year-old letters written by the once influential leader, though by no means orthodox supporter, of the Philosophical Radicals. Students of his *Political Economy* and *Autobiography* already know that his Benthamism was varied with a streak of sentimental Socialism, which marked him off, quite distinctly, from thinkers like Ricardo. Also, he was something of an opportunist or possibilist. While he looked forward, perhaps, to an eventual nationalisation of wealth, he did not believe in expropriation without proper compensation to dispossessed persons. Nor did he consider that the working-classes in his time were morally or intellectually fit to become citizens of a Collectivist community. He was not afraid to tell them of their faults. One of the most honourable incidents of his public career was his refusal, as candidate for Westminster, to repudiate or explain away his previous statement that they were given to lying. It has been acutely said of him and others of his school that they desired to give power to the

working-classes on condition that they were guided in its use by the principles and culture of the upper middle-class. In one of these letters Mill drops a remark—not elsewhere developed—that no class should be rendered supreme over the others. If that dictum had been deliberately followed up it would have landed him in a position very different from that which he always upheld. We can but suppose that the expression escaped him almost unawares. Yet we know that his letters, even to intimate friends, were carefully considered, copied, and sometimes recopied.

Severely intellectual and rigid in public morals, Mill detested toadies of the people not less heartily than sycophants of a despot. He believed that the working-men would be demoralised by flattery if they should obtain complete power. On the contrary, he wished them to be shamed by advice and precept out of the class selfishness displayed by the trade-unionists of his day. He was as strict in enforcing the obligations as in urging the rights of citizenship. In 1870, when war had broken out between France and Germany, he declared it was vain to sing the praises of peace and descant on the horrors of the battlefield. "Our turn will come," he exclaimed, and argued that we must prepare ourselves for the struggle. There should be universal training for lads, followed by six months in manhood and a few days each year afterwards. A standing army he

would maintain only for the protection of our foreign possessions. His work at the India office, to which frequent allusions are made, prevented him from being a Little Englander, and at one great crisis he stood out for a spirited foreign policy. —

“If Gladstone had been a great man” (he wrote in 1870) “this war would never have broken out, for he would nobly have taken on himself the responsibility of declaring that the English navy should actively aid whichever of the two Powers was attacked by the other. This would have been a beginning of the international justice we are calling for. I do not much blame Gladstone for not daring to do it, for it requires a morally braver man than any of our statesmen to run this kind of risk.”

Here we have a presentation of Mill in his double character, at once visionary and practical politician. It is perhaps no disparagement of his acumen that he treats France on this occasion as the aggressor and as a potential enemy of England. The materials for correcting that once prevalent mistake were not then available. He is, we may note, quite explicit on our duty to defend Belgium. The case of Holland had not yet come within public ken.

Except to professional students of metaphysics there are large portions of this book which will be without much appeal. The developments in Mill's mind of the Philosophy of Experience are a matter rather of scholastic history than living concern. By



almost universal consent his teachings, lucid as was the language in which they were set forth, and consistent as he was in applying his principles, have become antiquated. Mr. Hugh Elliot candidly admits that they are vitiated by the fact that he lived before the Evolution era. On the other side they have been smothered by the more acute, the more difficult, the more profound ontology which, rooted in German thought, has established itself amongst British metaphysics. Almost as generally abandoned is the ethical theorising which attempted, through the ridiculously overworked doctrines of Utility and Association, to deduce the moral code of Christianity from the naked Hedonism of the Greeks. The few adherents of that old-fashioned system support it with a difference—they branch off violently into the self-regarding paradoxes of Nietzsche and the Italian disciples now engaged in reducing their Master to self-evident absurdities.

The personal side of Mill's life has—unfortunately, we think—been emphasised in the injudicious apology tendered by his wife's grand-daughter. We are reminded, what we might as well have been allowed to forget, that as a young man he entered into Platonic philandering with a friend's wife. It has not been suggested that the relations between Mill and Mrs. Taylor were what are called guilty. But they sufficed to compel a worthy and magnanimous husband to break up his home ; and, after his

death, the marriage of the lady and her lover was apparently not regarded as a complete rectification. With an excess of chivalry Mill never quite forgave his mother because, on the first day after the announcement of the intended wedding, she neglected to call upon the bride-expectant. Upon one occasion—though that is doubtful—he may have visited his mother in her own house ; and then she was near the point of death. Otherwise he only received her at the India Office. His letters, though fairly frequent and dutiful, were cold. His sisters, though they were pathetically longsuffering, were not pardoned, and Miss Taylor has but a sophistical extenuation to plea for his harsh behaviour.

“ Mill’s letters to his own family are too many of them painful, though strangely interesting, reading. He cannot by the most wounding reproaches shake their faith in him as a ‘ great and good man.’ He seems to endeavour to do this, but fails. They recognise that he is cruel and insulting to them, and they suffer acutely, but their affection is as invincible as his resentment. It is wonderful to see a whole family thus loving and enduring. Not one bitter word is flung back to him. One sees that he reigns in all their hearts. A marvel of cruelty ! Yet how deep and rich must be the nature that can so reign in spite of all ! As one reads one feels less anger with him than deep love and admiration for these brave women, who seem to consider in each scornful word

only the wound from which it springs, and which they perpetually seek to find and heal."

The truth is that, like many other great men, Mill had to his character a petty, almost a mean, side. His resentment may be explained by devotion to the somewhat commonplace lady who inspired his passionate admiration, and became the subject of a noble, if absurdly exaggerated, eulogy in the preface of the work (the *Essay on Liberty*) which is most likely to remain part of English literature. And what was this love that made the trouble of an otherwise serene life, this marriage in which he sought (and found) all his happiness? Let us quote the declaration which he put into writing before he entered into the estate of matrimony:

" *March 6th, 1851.*

" Being about, if I am so happy as to obtain her consent, to enter into marriage with the only woman I have ever known with whom I would have entered into that state; and the whole character of the marriage relation as constituted by law being such as both she and I conscientiously disapprove, for this, amongst other reasons—that it confers upon one of the parties to the contract legal power and control over the person, property and freedom of action of the other party, independent of her own wishes and will, I, having no means of legally divesting myself of these odious powers (as I most assuredly would do if

an engagement to that effect could be made legally binding on me), feel it my duty to put on record a formal protest against the existing law of marriage in so far as conferring such powers, and a solemn promise never in any case or under any circumstances to use them. And in the event of marriage between Mrs. Taylor and me, I declare it to be my wish and intention, and the conditions of the engagement between us, that she retain in all respects whatever the same absolute freedom of action and freedom of disposal of herself and of all that does and may at any time belong to her, as if no such marriage had ever taken place ; and I absolutely disclaim and repudiate all pretence to have acquired any *rights* whatever by virtue of such marriage.

“ J. S. MILL.”

Was there ever such verbose nonsense ? It is pleasant to turn away from Mill the family man to Mill the friend. His letters to Carlyle, over-formal though they are, are delightful in their frankness. His admiration for a genius so different from his own, his recognition in the other of poetical qualities which he cannot claim, and of an intuition that he vainly aspires after, show that, with a cold power of self-measurement, he combined a warmth of genuine emotion. Nothing could be more gracious and tactful than his offer to compensate Carlyle, so far as money could make good, the loss of the *French*

*Revolution* manuscript in Mill's house. His farewell letters to John Sterling, who had written to say that his days were numbered, is infinitely pathetic: "I have never so much wished for another life," he replies, "as I do for the sake of meeting you." The dry philosopher was the most tender-hearted of men, and that must be remembered when we have to criticise his behaviour towards some members of his own family. The sympathy and loving-kindness, instead of being crushed out of him by the arid intellectual discipline so vividly described in the *Autobiography*, seem to have been but compressed during adolescence—to expand and bear fruit from early manhood to the last days of a calm maturity. To the historic villa where he passed them, amid the rolling plains of Avignon, many an unbeliever has made pilgrimage, as to the canonised saint of a devout Agnosticism—the only faith that he was ever taught or ever accepted.

## THE PASSING OF EDWARD VII

*Outlook*, May 21st, 1910

AT midnight on May 6 King Edward passed away ; yesterday at noon his mortal remains were borne from the capital of his Empire to the home and resting-place of the English Sovereigns. The intervening fortnight his subjects had spontaneously given up to the respectful demonstration of their loyalty, affection and sorrow. Officers of the Court may organise the apparatus of a public mourning, drape a town with the insignia of national lamentation, conduct through crowded streets a great pageant of woe which shall dwell in the memory of all beholders, and hereafter make a tale for their children and grandchildren. All this, and more than this, they can do, and have done, excellently well. But they cannot touch the heart of a people, draw the sob from women's bosoms, and bring a lump into men's throats. Indeed, the sense of personal grief is apt to be deadened by the collective sympathy of surrounding multitudes, by the amazement and stupor of a slowly moving panorama, by the massed emblems of regal splendour and historic tradition. To the stranger looking yesterday upon King

Edward's obsequies the occasion may have seemed rather a celebration of Empire than a valediction to its Ruler. But that is not how the ceremony struck any citizen of the world-wide State. It was not Edward Rex et Imperator, but Edward the Englishman, to whom we have paid our last tribute of outward respect, and who will long be cherished in the hearts of all who know how he lived and worked and died for the duty he owed and the love he freely rendered to the race of which he was servant and master.

Had King Edward's life been less happy than it was, he would yet have been requited for much trouble and sorrow, repaid over and over again for his labours in the nation's cause, by his unsurpassed popularity. What he inspired was something much deeper and stronger than the irresistible affection for one who was a good King, a good sportsman, and pre-eminently a good fellow. The nature of the feeling has this week been proved by the multitudes who kept vigil through the night that next morning they might pass, for a few mournful moments, through the hall where his body was resting. It was proved again yesterday by the self-imposed discipline of the spectators—the mourners, let us say, who claimed respectfully to share with the Royal Family in the sorrow of a personal bereavement. The quiet dignity of the tribute paid to King Edward's memory—the discerning phrase is King George's—

was the best evidence how profoundly the heart of the people was touched with pride for the monarch they had possessed and sorrow for the friend they had lost.

Other monarchs there have been, there are, who have laboured unremittingly, conscientiously, successfully, for their peoples, yet of none can it be said, as of King Edward, that criticism has been swallowed up in universal regard. Amongst ourselves there are plenty of persons who in no circumstances could bring themselves to praise a monarch, yet they are eager in eulogy of the man. Others there are who disliked and blamed certain policies which he was believed to have originated and known to have approved. Witness his much-canvassed visit to the Emperor of Russia. Without incurring unpopularity even amongst politicians not inclined to respect office and dignity, he carried out a purpose which he held right and expedient. At once the voice of censure was silenced. In a sense different from the jargon of the text-books, the King, our King Edward could do no wrong. So implicitly did the country trust his judgment that cavillers could get no hearing. Now the English people hitherto have been by no means chary of comment on their Sovereigns. There was no period before Queen Victoria's Jubilee when public men and popular newspapers shrank from discussing the aims and motives of the monarch of their day. The policy of the Court was as unceremoniously



handled as that of a party leader. Nor has the immunity against attack been gained by the Sovereign's enforced or voluntary self-effacement. Only the ignorant imagine that everything done in the name of Great Britain during the last two reigns was devised by the Ministers responsible to Parliament. On the contrary, the great influence gained by Queen Victoria and handed on, with notable increment, by King Edward, was earned by strength of will, force of character, proved capacity and judgment.

Something of the feeling with which the late King inspired his subjects, the confidence that he would, in any crisis, find means to hold back a perverse Ministry from irretrievable mischief, and preserve the nation from calamity, was shared by the rulers and statesmen of the nations represented yesterday in the company of Royal mourners. In part no doubt the courtesy of their attendance is a tribute paid to the international position of Great Britain. But if that were all, the compliment would not be remarkable: it would be no more than our own Court in turn would probably yield to any other Great Power bereaved of its head. There was, of course, another and fuller meaning to the assemblage this week in London of all these august and famous persons. They have come together in order to honour the name of a leader amongst kings. With some perhaps he had been in conflict of aims; his relations with others may have been darkened by

passing clouds. Nevertheless, his influence within the mysterious inner circle of Sovereigns amounted to something like authority—an hegemony resting not upon seniority and the claims of elder kinship, but simply on that inexplicable personal force which at home he displayed almost as soon as he had succeeded to his Mother's Throne. In the larger sphere of European diplomacy his power naturally was less rapid in maturing, nor was it consummated without struggle and jealousy. But without exception, we believe, the Imperial and Royal guests who have now bidden him their last farewell recognised and respected in him a master in kingcraft. Also as Lord Rosebery declared in his fine speech on Wednesday, the statesmen of Europe, who at the beginning of King Edward's reign were animated with distrust, if not dislike, of Great Britain, were by degrees converted to a better understanding both of our Ruler and our policy. They saw that, so far from stirring up trouble and encouraging intrigue, he was genuinely working for the peace of the world. The honesty of his purpose in international affairs is now almost as widely recognised as his eagerness to lessen suffering and relieve distress amongst his own subjects.

Gone are the days when men spoke lightly, whether in disparagement or in wistful regret, of the slender link of the Crown between the component States of the British Empire. It was then believed,

not without reason, that the destiny of our possessions oversea was to break away from the Mother-country and start a new life as independent communities. So careful and thoughtful a statesman-administrator as Lord Blachford held that the duty of the Imperial Government was to prepare for the severance and make it, when it should come, as gentle as might be. How different from the skilled forecast has been the actual development of the British Empire ! Yet it was only towards the very end of Queen Victoria's reign that the movement set in towards consolidation and federation of the Empire. The era of formative policy coincides almost exactly with the nine years of King Edward's rule, and, scrupulously though he abstained from interference in current controversy, he was in his Empire the strongest and most efficient of the Imperialists. We are not claiming that he approved this or that method of promoting British unity ; only that in his own person and by his magnetic influence he demonstrated beyond dispute the value of common Imperial life, the need of one Central Authority, the possibility of a British Federation of self-governing States. It was therefore fitting that amongst the most honoured and distinguished of the mourners yesterday should be placed representatives of the English-speaking peoples who inhabit and possess autonomous British lands, of great Indian feudatories who live under the shadow of the British authority,

and of dependencies whose recent and inchoate civilisation is being developed under British tutelage. There are few races of the earth, few stages of human culture, which are not comprised within the Empire of which King Edward was the titular and governing chief. His figure and his life stood with equal success the tests of distant vision and near inspection. The Prince who was yesterday mourned by four hundred millions of people was by universal consent a great ruler, whether his work be measured by the exacting standards of day-by-day criticism in the most sophisticated of modern cities, or viewed in the perspective of remote hero-worship. Not soon will the memory fade or the glories depart from the name of Edward the Englishman.

## LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

*Guardian*, December 12th, 1906

THE dexterous phrases and flashes of sympathetic insight which abound in Lord Rosebery's estimate of Lord Randolph Churchill do not disguise the amateurish nature of the performance. There is no visible attempt to observe either an order of events or a sequence of thought. It is disappointing that a statesman who has stood so long behind the scenes of public life and enjoyed an intimate acquaintance with the fascinating politician whose character he affects to portray should tell us nothing, except a few anecdotes, with which we have not long been familiar. It must be remembered, of course, that Lord Rosebery has always practised, in regard to his own inmost thoughts, an almost jealous reticence, and may hold that a similar reserve is due to his friends and the men and women with whom he was associated. But in that case why write about Lord Randolph, to whom publicity was as the very breath of his nostrils? Above all, why make at least two statements which may be decorous, but are notoriously incorrect? If we are to have the "personal note" in biography—and Lord Rosebery uses it

freely—it should not be misleading. The explanation of the faults in this little book may, perhaps, be found in its origin. Shortly after Lord Randolph's death his mother asked Lord Rosebery to write something about him. "I excused myself," he says, "as it was then too near his time." From this scruple he was released by the appearance of Mr. Winston Churchill's two volumes, and the present essay, in fact if not in form, is largely a criticism, and, in most respects, an endorsement of that elaborate but incomplete narrative.

Lord Rosebery, we believe, is the first public writer who has successfully analysed Lord Randolph's distinctive humour. Consciously or unconsciously, he founded both his style and way of thinking upon *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. His main literary passion, we are told, was Gibbon. To him, as an undergraduate, he "gave what leisure of reading he had to give, and this literary devotion lasted to the end." "Randolph's humour may be fairly described as burlesque conception, set off by an artificial pomp of style; a sort of bombastic irony, such as we occasionally taste with relish in an after-dinner speech. Sometimes it is what one could imagine that Gibbon might have uttered had he gone on the stump." This is one of Lord Rosebery's most admirable touches, but he adds that Lord Randolph's exuberance sometimes over-reached itself and seemed rather a cynical experiment on the

political digestion of his audience. Take the passage about the Whigs :

“ I can see the viscous, slimy trail of that political reptile which calls itself the Whig party gleaming and glistening upon every line of it. I see that most malignant monster endeavouring, as it did in 1832, to coil itself round the constituencies of England and to suppress the free action and to smother the natural voice of the English people.”

We have no doubt that Lord Randolph himself admired the simile and considered it forcible, though he would have understood, had he chosen to think for a moment, that he had overshot the mark. The same tendency showed itself even in his private letters :—

“ The truth, perhaps, is that the constant exercise of irony made sometimes a confusion as to whether he was writing seriously or not. I well remember a letter in his undergraduate days, couched in terms of some severity which I believed to be ironical, but which I afterwards found to be seriously meant.”

It is quite a delusion to suppose that Lord Randolph wrote or spoke easily. Before he appeared in public he shut himself up for two days and carefully wrote out his speech. “ When he had read the manuscript twice over carefully he had learned it by heart. Armed with copious notes, without which, he told me, he could not approach a platform, he was ready for his audience. Without great dramatic art

of delivery he repeated the speech in a way that made it seem absolutely fresh and spontaneous." It was his habit to send the manuscript to the Press, and on one occasion, when he was to make speeches on three consecutive days, passed as many sleepless nights for fear the editor would confuse the order of the orations. This practice of careful preparation may, perhaps, account for the fact that, effective as Lord Randolph was in the House of Commons, his chief successes were won on the platform, and also for his collapse before his fatal illness had yet made any great inroad on his mental powers. Though delivery was a natural gift, composition was a painfully acquired art. It throws a new light upon some of his most daring epigrams to learn that they were laboriously prepared—as, for instance, the scoff at Mr. Gladstone's favourite exercise: "For the purposes of recreation he has selected the felling of trees, and we may usefully remark that his amusements, like his politics, are constantly destructive. The forest laments in order that Mr. Gladstone may perspire." This is the kind of thing that ought to be improvised, and we are not quite grateful to Lord Rosebery for letting us into the stage secret. Another daring and more literary flight was the reference to the electioneering misfortunes of the Liberal leaders:

"We remember . . . when Mr. Gladstone, flying with impetuous haste from one corner of the country to the



other, was hurled down by your southern division. Down through electoral space he fell, nor was his fall arrested till he had reached the distant borough of Greenwich. Down, too, at that time fell Lord Hartingdon, his colleague, whom an obscure group of villages in Wales received and nourished."

It is true, as Lord Rosebery tells us, that Lord Randolph was a born party leader—brilliant, courageous, resourceful and unembarrassed by scruple. He had the "vital mainspring of zest"—whether he was engaged in politics, hunting, racing, or chess. He had charm of manner (when he chose to exert it) and rare gifts of conversation, while the extravagant views and audacious paradoxes which he would start at a moment's notice were but dinner-table amusements. Lord Rosebery adds, and speaks as one who knows, that he had a faithful and warm heart, and that his friendships were "singularly staunch." Yet he managed to quarrel, at one time or another, not only with his party, but also with most of its prominent individual members, and, as a rule, on personal grounds. The truth is that "lovable and winning" as he was, free from all "base and unpardonable faults," he was from the first a *mauvais coucheur*, and remained so to the end. Lord Rosebery tries to explain the disagreements by the suggestion, several times repeated, that Lord Randolph was on the wrong side in politics. It would be nearer the truth to say that he did not

understand Conservatism any better than Lord Rosebery understands Liberalism. But there is this much foundation for the attempted apology, that on several fundamental questions Lord Randolph was out of sympathy with Conservatism. Though he used a fine phrase about the Church of England as "an institution which elevates the life of the nation and consecrates the acts of the State," he was, Lord Rosebery confesses, indifferent about the Establishment as he was about property. He was not an Imperialist, and he was an Economist bent upon reducing taxation at the risk of starving the Army and Navy. Again, on Home Rule, in spite of Mr. Winston Churchill's argument, he was something more than suspect, though, perhaps, Lord Rosebery exaggerates the closeness of the understanding with Mr. Parnell. All these points taken together make a distinct Liberal showing, yet, disgusted as he was with what he considered the bad treatment received from the Conservative leaders, he never approached near to Liberalism. Writing in 1891, he declared that "no power could make him lift hand or voice for the Tories, just as no power could make him join the other side."

Lord Randolph appears to have pinned his faith to Tory Democracy as a constructive creed around which he could gather a following, and when Mr. Balfour became Leader of the House of Commons he laments that "Tory Democracy, the genuine article,

is at an end." But it will not do, with Lord Rosebery, to dismiss that evanescent force as "originally an escapade," or a device for "enabling Liberals by conviction to remain Tories by profession." It was a battering-ram against Mr. Gladstone, and when he had been overthrown in 1886 there was no further use for the machine. This Lord Randolph would not or could not understand: "He was intoxicated with a success and popularity which Disraeli, as a young or middle-aged man, had never achieved. He thought then that he could take his party with him." But, as soon as he began to launch his audacious programmes the party kicked: "Though hon. members," he complained, "do not in the least object to my winning applause at great mass meetings in the country, there seems to be considerable difference of opinion when I attempt to carry these opinions to a practical conclusion." Lord Randolph, like other ambitious politicians, imagined that the great men of a party are profoundly concerned that this or that leader shall have a brilliant career, and, in order to secure his success, will swallow any programme which he likes to put before them. This may be true of party organisers and party workers. They are apt to be fascinated by a star performer, but, except at rare moments of enthusiasm, the bulk of the electors think vastly more about measures than about men. It is a fact which distinguished statesmen, like popular actors, are in their natural vanity and self-con-

sciousness apt to overlook. But there is nothing which an aspirant for public favour should more carefully scrutinise than the precise market value of the magnetism which for the moment he may be exercising on his party. No man in recent times seemed more firmly rooted in democratic affection than Lord Randolph Churchill. On the platform he was by far the most attractive speaker of his day, Mr. Gladstone not excepted. As Leader of the House of Commons he exhibited astonishing aptitude and address. The public admired his audacity, laughed at his sallies, and believed in his political inspiration.

In such circumstances, having superseded Sir Stafford Northcote and placed his own nominees in the Cabinet, he was tempted to measure himself against Lord Salisbury, a statesman who held in one corner of his brain more wit, more wisdom, and more courage than Lord Randolph would have attained if he had spent a lifetime in serious preparation for statecraft instead of dashing into politics for the sake of making himself a name. He was so flattered by friends and beguiled by toadies that he fancied himself indispensable. When he resigned as Chancellor of the Exchequer he believed that the gap could never be filled. "He forgot Goschen," and so long as he lived never recovered from the cold, daunting surprise that he was hardly missed in public life. Of the few disclosures which Lord Rosebery permits himself to make in this brief study, the most interesting is his

statement, drawn from personal knowledge, that Lord Randolph never intended or expected that his resignation would be accepted. As on previous occasions he thought that he would be invited to reconsider his determination and permitted to impose his own conditions. Probably he hoped that Lord Salisbury would suggest a personal interview—a thing which Lord Salisbury never suggested to anybody.

It would be idle to pretend that Lord Randolph at any period of his career either was animated by a higher purpose than a not ignoble ambition, or was capable of taking a broad view of party exigencies. Yet he did brilliant work in his time, and leaves a fascinating memory behind him. But if we look at what he accomplished, his main work was assisting in the overthrow of Mr. Gladstone. Even that feat has been exaggerated by contemporary enthusiasts. It must not be forgotten that the spirited guerrilla campaign of the Fourth Party in the 1880–1885 Parliament did not result in a victory at the ensuing General Election. Mr. Gladstone came back with a majority, and overthrew the stop-gap Conservative Ministry. It was the Home Rule adventure that ruined Mr. Gladstone, as it will ruin any other leader or party which attempts it, not the intrinsic strength of the revived and reorganised Conservative Party.

## LONDON IN MID-SEPTEMBER

BY A MAROONED CITIZEN

*Guardian*, September 19th, 1906

HALF the main thoroughfares of the town are up—just as though it were the Season. Only by skipping learnedly to and fro among trams and tubes and tunnels, or diving trustfully into municipal subways, can the traveller from north to south or west to east avoid blocks and blinded alleys. It is the man who has nothing particular to do and the partner of his cares who most viciously resent this waste of their time. The mere business man is happy enough to be retarded on his way to the City—where, as usual, nothing is doing—when he finds his motor-omnibus deflected from the straight familiar route and steered at sharp, astonishing angles through odd and sordid by-paths and historic purlieus. Passing from the confused hum of traffic, he will find himself plunged into a comparative silence amid which the notes of the barrel-organ or the street-hawker's cry arouse distinct and not altogether unpleasing sensations. His nostrils, perhaps, will be tickled by strange and pungent odours, especially from an unsuspected fried-fish shop, where a family of per-

spiring Hebrews are scraping up a livelihood from the necessities of still poorer Gentiles, and week by week saving up shillings for the *viaticum* which shall bring over some kinsman in South Russia to this land of plenty. If perchance our observer has eyes for anything outside trade and business, he may glance at the tired, hurried, harassed gentleman in dusty broadcloth. He has been stopped on his errand into some slum, too tortuous even for an alternative 'bus route, and is saying a few cheerful words to a knot of youngsters—their garments ragged but their faces bright from the one wash in their day—who are gathered about the door of the National School. Our City gentleman looks curiously at the priest, and wonders what can have induced a fellow who has had a college education to spend his time in that ghastly district and among those awful people. "If he sticks to it for a bit, he thinks somebody will give him a fat country living!" And so the subject is dismissed. But, now and again, among the involuntary explorers of London's mean streets, there may be some who retain a more permanent impression from these cinematographic revelations of life in the slums. The idea haunts them uncomfortably, and they do not purchase an easy conscience till Sunday morning, when they drop into the offertory a shame-faced sovereign among the shillings and florins of their unawakened friends and neighbours.

Yet it is not the poverty or misery of London

which is most obvious in the dead season. Rather is one led to think of the vast amount of money saved, begged, or borrowed for the autumn holiday-making. That for weeks and months together the dirty-white blinds should be drawn down, and invest with a new dismalness the gaunt squares of Mayfair and Belgravia and the prim terraces of South Kensington and Bayswater is but part of the natural and expected order. The absentee tenants are rich folk, or, under social pains and penalties, bound to seem so. Nor does one easily believe the familiar legend that behind some of those veiled frontages may be found the householder and his family, making furtive exits and entrances, to emerge next month with brave tales of delightful foreign travel and charming visits to country houses. The truth is that holiday-making is like smoking. Begun in bravado, it is continued as a pleasure, and finally becomes an ineradicable habit. There are plenty of people who might be fairly comfortable all the year round if they did not insist on impoverishing themselves in August and September. But these are the people who think they have a position to keep up. What is astonishing to the moralist on the motor-'bus is that so many thousands and tens of thousands of middle-class people, who cannot labour under a similar delusion, should afford themselves the same indulgence. Cast your eye along one of the innumerable blocks of new flats which are being run up in outer London, the rentals



ranging from £75 to £120 a year, and you find quite half the tenements forsaken. The same story is told in every row of little stucco villas inhabited by "the class which begins to wear a black coat." The rent may be in arrear and the rate-collector clamorous, but wife and family must be sent to the seaside until it is time for the children to go back to school.

Though all the "smart set" and half the middle-class have deserted the town, London is never so bright and pleasant—Piccadilly on a sunny morning in May always excepted—as in September. The thinning-down of the traffic, both human and vehicular, allows the shop-windows to be inspected at leisure, and gives one glimpses of the contour of the streets and their buildings. For the first time the strayed tourist who has run up to do some shopping realises that Bond Street is not simply a jamb of carriages and pedestrians, but a winding and undulating ascent, full of colour and suggestive of historical memories, gay or sad, and not invariably edifying. London in September is the happy hunting-ground of the natty "school-marm" (U.S.A.), with her little reticule flapping from her demure "shirt-waist," and all the notable events in English history, with full details about every King and Queen, tripping from her tongue. The German tourist is in his glory—gesticulating, talking loudly, and shouldering every meek-living pedestrian on to the kerbstone, but honestly appreciative, not meaning to be

rude, only devoted to his mission of putting the Over-man doctrine into practice, taking off his hat quite politely, and accepting in faultless English your hypocritical apology for elbowing him on to the right side of the road. Our French visitors, perhaps, in their zeal for the *entente cordiale*, overdo their ecstasies over all things English—our women, our policemen, and our street statues. But their sincerity is so obvious, their gaiety so infectious, that when we stroll among them and listen to their talk we begin to feel that it is a mistake, after all, to go to Paris or Brussels or Florence for our pleasuring, and that this sombre, shapeless London of ours is the city of amusement. Its attractions have already been discovered by some of the natives. In Westminster Abbey the other day a distinguished actor was detected in personally conducting a family party round the monuments, and playing havoc with the centuries while he expounded some of the leading events of our rough island story. But he was sound enough about his Irving—and having reached that point, the real object of his pilgrimage, he hurried off to a *matinée*. For some of the best theatres are open, and doing excellent business. Every year they depend less and less on the Londoner's patronage; more and more on the suburban dweller, the foreigner, and the country cousin. What is true of the stage is true of all the other great London institutions. In spite of metropolitan arrogance towards

everything provincial, there is no such thing as public life in the capital, no sense of corporate and civic existence. The City of London is an historic memory, the County of London an administrative figment—even the London County Council stands only for rhetoric and rates.



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